



COLORADO  
ITS PARKS & MOUNTAINS

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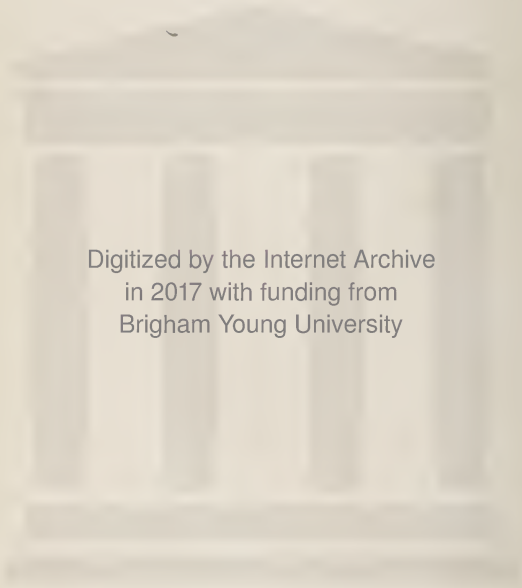
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A SUMMER VACATION

In the Parks and Mountains

OF

COLORADO.

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BY SAMUEL BOWLES,

AUTHOR OF "ACROSS THE CONTINENT."

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SPRINGFIELD, MASS:  
Samuel Bowles & Company.

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1869.

PROYCO, STAH

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THESE letters of a Summer Vacation, in saddle and camp, among the great Central Parks and Mountains of America in Colorado, are gathered into this volume in order both to satisfy and stimulate the public interest in a region of our New West destined to a peculiar place in the future of America. We saw enough of it in our stage ride across the Continent in 1865 to suggest that it would become the Switzerland of America ; Bayard Taylor, a wider traveler and closer observer, made a more familiar tour in 1866, and more formally pronounced the same judgment ; and now, after a new visit, and an intimate acquaintance with all its details, we find our original enthusiasm more than rekindled, our original thought confirmed.

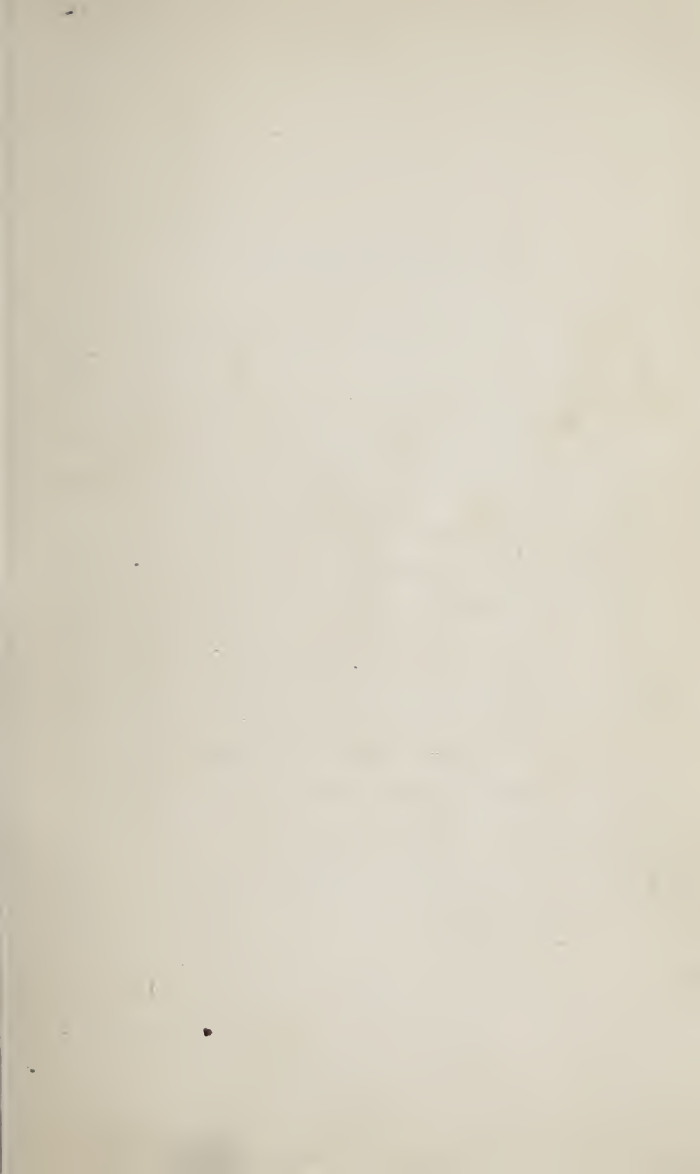
The distinctive physical feature of Colorado is her wide elevated Parks, lying among her double and treble folds of the continental range of mountains—great plains, like counties in Illinois and Iowa, or states in New England, six thousand to nine thousand feet above the sea-level, surrounded by mountains that rise from three to five thousand feet higher ; plains, green with grass, dark with groves, bright with flowers ; mountains, dreary with rocks, white with snow. The distinctive charm is the atmosphere, so clear and pure and dry all the while, as

to be a perpetual feeling, rather than vision, of beauty ; invigorating every sense, softly soothing every pain, lending a glory to landscape and life alike, clothing every feature of nature with beauty, and giving the eye of every spectator the power to see it—this is the indescribable thing that lifts Colorado out of other lackings, and more than compensates, in the comparison, for what is peculiar to Switzerland.

Here, where the great backbone of the Continent rears and rests itself ; here, where nature sets the patterns of plain and mountain, of valley and hill, for all America ; here, where spring the waters that wash two-thirds the western Continent and feed both its oceans ; here, where mountains are fat with gold and silver, and prairies glory in the glad certainty of future harvests of corn and wheat—here, indeed, is the center and the central life of America,—fountain of its wealth and health and beauty. Switzerland is pleasure and health ; Colorado is these and use besides—the use of beauty, and the use of profitable work united. I beg every traveler by the Pacific Railroad not to “ pass it by on the other side ;” for, in so doing, he would offend the best that is in him.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., }  
*February, 1869.* }

S. B.



## LETTERS.

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# COLORADO:

## Its Parks and Mountains.

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### I.

#### THE PACIFIC RAILROAD.

The Contrast of 1865 and 1868—Vice-President Colfax, Governor Bross and their Summer Vacation Party—Chicago and the Ride thither—The Pullman Cars of the West—From New York to San Francisco without Leaving the Car—West from Chicago—Council Bluffs and Omaha—Across the Plains by Railroad—Cheyenne—Up the Mountains—The Charms of Scenery and Atmosphere—Railroad Cities, their Rise and Fall—How the Railroad is built—Back to Cheyenne.

ON THE DIVIDE OF THE ATLANTIC AND PACIFIC OCEANS, }  
August, 1868. }

TO-DAY the Pacific Railroad climbs over the line that separates the waters of the oceans. We sit astride the crest of the continental mountains, and see the last rail on the Atlantic slope and the first on the Pacific fastened down. It is an era in our lives,—it is an era in our national life. Three years ago, the Pacific Railroad was hardly commenced,—not a rail was laid this side of the Missouri River; now there are eight hundred miles of iron track

from that river west ; on the other side from the Pacific Ocean east, six hundred miles are laid ; and early in 1869,—while you are reading these pages, my friend,—the Continent will be spanned, and the cars will run from ocean to ocean. Only the energy of a Republic could perform such a work in so brief a time.

Three summers ago, our little party of four persons were ten days and nights in stages in reaching this point from the Missouri River ; now our larger party of a dozen have been swept up hither in a day and a half from Omaha, and two days and a half from Chicago. Another year the journey from Boston to San Francisco, that then occupied a full month, will be compassed in a single week. Dividing the across-the-continent trip into thirds, this crest of the mountains is two-thirds the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Chicago is twelve hundred miles from Boston ; here we are twelve hundred miles from Chicago ; and about the same distance from San Francisco in the other direction:

Our summer vacation party to these central mountains of our New West is the outgrowth of the excursion that Speaker Colfax led across the Continent in 1865. Now as then he is the central figure. Governor Bross of Illinois comes next, now as then the favorite of the crowds that gather at every stopping place for a speech, and the leader in all our enjoyments. We miss one of the original four ; but new recruits and the ladies, then denied us, carry up our numbers to near a dozen. Chicago is the gathering-point ; there the Old West culmi-

nates, and the New West begins. Soon she must cast her lot with the East,—for westward, indeed, the star of empire takes its way; but for the season, she sits in the center of railway commerce, East and West, and, motherly and queenly both, broods benignantly over the Continent.

Whether you come west to Chicago by Erie or New York Central, by Pittsburg and Fort Wayne, by Michigan Southern or Michigan Central, leaving at the same hour, you are swept into Chicago at the very same moment. The thousand mile journey is run on either route to one schedule of time. Passengers, who part at the supper table at Rochester, bow to each other out of the rival car windows twenty-four hours later at the junction of the two Michigan roads in the outer suburbs of Chicago; while those, who bade each other good-bye in New York twelve hours earlier, race along side by side on the Fort Wayne and Michigan Southern roads, through the slaughter-house and bone-boiling adjacencies of the great city of the North-west, to their neighboring station-houses.

It seems strange that in this new and rough West of ours, where the fight is fresh with all the elements of nature, and ease and luxury, if not despised, at least are generally postponed, there should be more comfortable and luxurious accommodations for railway travel than anywhere else in the world. Yet it is so. Europe and the Atlantic states provide on none of their railways as yet so elegant and ease-giving carriages as the saloon and sleeping and refreshment cars that are offered to travelers

on the long routes of the West. They are the invention of Mr. George W. Pullman, who has thus associated his name forever with one of the greatest improvements in railway travel. Some are provided with kitchen and larder, and will furnish at any hour a meal that rivals Delmonico; and the traveler can leisurely eat breakfast or dinner from his own little private table, as the train sweeps along at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour. Their broad, luxurious seats or sofas by day are turned at night into generous beds with clean linen and close curtains if you would have them. The ventilation is perfect; the freedom from dust and cinders only tolerably so; but the chief limitation is in the way of toilette accommodations. One disposed to abandon himself or herself to privacy and much water in this respect chafes somewhat at the common corner and wash-bowl and single looking-glass, however elegant and cleanly; but when a dozen to forty people undertake to keep house for three days or a week in a single car, there must be some sacrifices of fastidiousness to the spirit of travel. That the Pullman car demands so few is the wonder.

These cars are owned by companies distinct from the railroads, and added to the trains of the latter by special arrangements. Additional charges are made to passengers who occupy them, varying with the amount of room and service taken, but about on a par with the prices of first-class hotels for lodgings and meals. To enjoy their comforts to the full, a party of a dozen or twenty should charter the ex-



clusive use of one ; and when the continental pleasure travel to the Pacific sets in next year, this will be a very common fashion. Starting from Boston, New York, Niagara, or Chicago, in your Pullman parlor, dining-room and bed-room, with servants to attend to all wants, the journey to San Francisco may be made with a degree of comfort and luxury, unequalled heretofore in all the dreams of travel, and without necessarily leaving the car from the beginning to the end of the three thousand mile ride. Such a company and such a car were ours from Chicago to the present end of the Railroad and back, and four days of more comfortable and enjoyable travel—while half a continent of plain and mountain and river was unrolled before us—can hardly be imagined. A little house organ was built into the side of our car, and by its aid we kept time to the music of nature as we rolled over the prairie and up the hills to the crest of the continental mountains.

From Chicago to Omaha, where is the beginning of the Pacific Railroad proper, is five hundred miles, across Northern Illinois and through Central Iowa, by the Chicago and North-western Railway, and crossing the Mississippi River midway. Two more roads, lower down in Illinois and Iowa, will be done next year—those by Rock Island and Burlington—and give Chicago and Omaha three connecting lines, and all nearly direct. St. Louis, also, has a railroad connection with Omaha by the road down the Missouri River to St. Joseph and Kansas City, meeting at both points lines across Missouri to its

commercial city. In fact, this puts Omaha and the Pacific Road one hundred and twenty-five miles nearer to St. Louis than to Chicago; but Chicago is more than that farther east.

Though but a new country, for most of our way, from Chicago to Omaha, we were rarely out of sight of the golden stubble of wheat or the rich green of waving cornfields. The wonder is constant alike at the richness of the soil, the beauty of the rolling prairie, the abundance of the harvests, the rapid settlement and cultivation of the country,—where all the people came from, and where all the grain and hay they grow goes to.

Council Bluffs in Iowa and Omaha in Nebraska are one in inspiration and growth; but the muddy Missouri rolls between, and makes them nominal rivals. Both are having a rapid development, and must be great towns. The roads from the North, South and East, to connect with the Pacific Road, must all center at Council Bluffs. The wide meadow—three to five miles wide—between the bluffs and the river will be intersected with their tracks, and thickly planted with their depots, and peopled with their dependents. Three roads—north to Sioux City, south to St. Joseph and St. Louis, east to Chicago—are already here; two more will come next year; and in ten years as many lines will center at this point. Already Council Bluffs has eight thousand inhabitants, and she added thirteen hundred buildings last year. The older and more attractive parts of the town lie back on the bluffs and in the wooded ravines

among them—a winning location, where healthfulness and beauty appear combined, and where will gather the real resident population of Council Bluffs.

Omaha rises more directly and symmetrically from the opposite bank ; its bluffs or plateaus sweep up sharply from the water, and circle around in a grand amphitheatrical form,—somewhat as Springfield lies to the Connecticut River ; you see its majesty of location and its wide-spreading improvements at a glance ; the operations of the Pacific Road, of which it is the beginning and the headquarters, have given it almost feverish development ; and it already holds a population of fifteen thousand to seventeen thousand. But with such rich conjunction of water and railway communication ; with the river at its feet, navigable to the Rocky Mountains, north and west, and to the Gulf of Mexico, south—two thousand miles in either direction ; with the workshops and head-quarters of the great Railroad of the Continent within its territory, and all the lines from the East and North and South centering before and around it, to make their connections and transshipments ; with a State back of it certainly as large and as rich in agricultural wealth as any in the great West,—Omaha surely need feel no misgiving as to the future, but may proudly accept her destiny as one of the great interior cities of the nation. Directly, a bridge will be raised over the river to Council Bluffs, and then passengers and merchandise can go back and forth in the same cars that they came in from New York or Sacramento.

Now out upon the grand continental Railroad into the ocean of the Plains. It is five hundred miles to the base of the central mountains ; up an imperceptible but steadily ascending grade of ten feet to the mile ; and for nearly the whole distance along by the wide but shallow, fierce but fallow Platte River, which, gathering in the melted snows of all this slope of the Rocky Mountains, sweeps across the wide plains,—that, one day, by dams and ditches, it is destined to fertilize for miles on each side and make its wilderness to blossom as the rose,—and carries the grand tide into the Missouri below Omaha. For two hundred miles, Nebraska is slashed by cross rivers, tributaries of Platte or Missouri ; the land lies in long, beautiful rolls ; timber is in tolerably good supply ; and the soil is as fertile as any in the West. The climate is well-balanced ; oats, corn and wheat yield as richly and as of fine quality as in any state in the Union ; and the rapid growth and great wealth of Nebraska are the surest things in our future. Hardly any state in the Mississippi and Missouri valleys has larger capacities. The settlement of her first two hundred miles west from the Missouri is surprisingly rapid ; well-cultivated farms are rarely out of sight ; and the population has certainly trebled in this three years' interval of our visits.

This limit passed, the prairie roll ceases ; timber and side-streams are no more seen ; the dead level of the Plains fills the eye ; relieved only, twenty to thirty miles north and south, by the faint line of low bluffs, and a scant, irregular growth of cotton-

woods along the line of the Platte itself. But the grass is strong and green; the soil laughs at the old nickname of the great American desert; here, at least, is pasturage unbounded,—wheat, too, I believe, without irrigation, and with irrigation everything. But the first results of the Railroad are to kill what settlement and cultivation these plains had reached under the patronage of slow-moving emigration, stage-travel, and prairie-schooner freightage. The ranches which these supported are now deserted; the rails carry everybody and everything; the old roads are substantially abandoned; the old settlers, losing all their improvements and opportunities, gather in at the railway stations, or move backwards or forwards to greater local developments. They are the victims, in turn, of a higher civilization; they drove out the Indian, the wolf, and the buffalo; the locomotive whistles their occupation away; and invites back for the time the original occupants.

The day's ride grows monotonous. The road is as straight as an arrow. Every dozen or fifteen miles is a station,—two or three sheds and a water-spout and woodpile; every one hundred miles or so a home or division depot, with shops, eating-house, "saloons" uncounted, a store or two, a few cultivated acres, and the invariable half a dozen seedy, staring loafers, that are a sort of fungi indigenous to American railways. The meals are abundant and good,—breakfast, dinner and supper each the same as the other, and only apt to be uncertain in bread and butter. We yawn over the un-

changing landscape and the unvarying model of the stations, and lounge and read by day, and go to bed early at night. But the clear, dry air charms; the half dozen soldiers hurriedly marshalled into line at each station as the train comes up, suggest the Indians; we catch a glimpse of antelopes in the distance; and we watch the holes of the prairie dogs for their piquant little owners and their traditional companions of owls and snakes,—but never see the snakes.

Fremont (46 miles from Omaha) and Columbus (91) are the most considerable and promising settlements of Nebraska on the line of the road. The latter disputed the political capital with Omaha, but Lincoln, little more than a paper town as yet, and off the railway line, has won it from both. Old Fort Kearney, 200 miles out, a representative of the old-time life of the Plains, is fading away. The chief stations of the Railroad, so far, are Grand Island (153 miles), North Platte (291), Sidney (414), Cheyenne (516), and Laramie (572). Julesburg, last year so lively a settlement, and at one time before an important military post, is now abandoned altogether,—a few log and board shanties and turf huts are all that remain of its former high uncivilization. Cheyenne alone takes on the air of permanency and feels the hopes of promise. After "Hell," as the end town of the Railroad has been appropriately called, moved on, it was a serious question with her whether to be or not to be,—whether she was anything or nothing. The problem seems to be solved in her favor. She stands at the end of the Plains, at the begin-

ning of the Mountains ; the Railroad must have important shops here ; it is the point of divergence for Colorado to the South, and the Railroad to Denver connects with the main line here,—ultimately the Kansas or St. Louis Pacific Railroad will, as Congress has ordered, make its connection by this branch ; a fine agricultural country surrounds, feeding the mountains beyond,—altogether material enough to make a permanency of Cheyenne. She has now three or four thousand inhabitants, who are settling down into reasonable soberness and serious work ; three daily papers struggle for support ; several good church buildings are erected or erecting ; brick and stone are supplanting canvass and rough boards as building materials ; and taverns and restaurants and stores well respond to all human appetites and needs and tastes. Though the town is six thousand feet above the level of the sea, it lies on an open prairie country, and the mountains are only dimly discernible in the distance. It is the principal settlement of the new territory of Wyoming, but so near Colorado, that the latter territory covets and half claims it.

Now the road grows more interesting. We do not enter mountains, except in fancy,—they have been levelled for our track ; but the plain ascends rapidly ; the debris of the old mountains stand around in fantastic shapes ; the forms of the remaining mountains rise vast and majestic, blue and white and black, in the far distance, north and south ; in thirty-two miles the track ascends over two thousand feet, but so uniformly is the rise distributed

that at no point is the grade above eighty feet to the mile; and at Sherman or Evans's Pass, we are eight thousand two hundred and sixty-two feet above the sea level—the highest point in the whole line of the Pacific Railroad, yet the crest, not of the main or continental range of mountains, but of its eastern line of "Black Hills," so called. Out of narrower plain, free from these ruins of the old mountains, down a thousand feet or so, the road next enters upon and crosses the wide Laramie Plains; a trifle sheltered, yet open to sharp suns and long, piercing breezes, and selected for their various attractions for the summer homes of the railroad officials. These were famous hunting-grounds of the Indians; agreeable resting-places for the emigrant caravans of old; and long the chief outpost of the army in the mountain region.

All this section of the road for one hundred and fifty miles west of Cheyenne possesses the greatest novelty and charm for the traveler. The senses all dilate with what is spread before and around him; rich black mountains bound the horizon north and south; a dash of snow on peak or side occasionally enlivens the view and deepens the coloring; along your pathway are fine valleys or broader plains, rich in grass and flowers; nature has fashioned it for a railroad; scattered around in valley or plain, as the track approaches the summit, are monuments of rock, grotesquely or symmetrically arranged; here a wall as if for a bulwark, there the ruin of cathedral or fort, again a half-finished building, anon the fashion of a huge, dismasted screw



steamer, with paddle astern and pilot-boat ahead ; over all an atmosphere so pure that the eye seems to take in all space, and so dry and exhilarating that life titillates at every avenue, and we mount as if on angel's wings. Here would seem to be the fountain of health ; and among these hills and plains is surely to be many a summer resort for the invalid and the pleasure-seeker in the by no means distant future. The hills have timber, though the plains are bare of it, and the water runs pure and bright, and carries trout in abundance, as plains and mountains give deer, mountain sheep, antelope and grouse. This whole wide pathway up and over the mountains seems to have been fashioning for its present use for ages. The hills have wasted into plain ; those solid walls of feldspar and granite disintegrated and dissipated into a fine gravel, that is the very perfection of a railway bed ; while these "buttes" or monuments of remaining rock, that lie scattered about with such picturesque effect, are all that are left, the very kernel, so to speak, of what was once but a close succession of real rocky mountains—a Pelion upon Ossa that forbade passage to wheel of wagon or car.

But the next section of one hundred and fifty miles is a sad contrast. The charms of atmosphere and of distant mountains remain ; but the green grass, the flowers, the pure water, the oases of trees, all depart, and we have a dreary waste of sage bush, a barren, alkali, dusty soil, little water, and that bitter and poisonous. This is the Bitter Creek country, so horrible to slow emigrant travel, so

painful to stage passengers. The eye has no joy, the lips no comfort through it; the sun burns by day, the cold chills at night; the fine, impalpable, poisonous dust chokes and chafes and chaps you everywhere. It is within this region that my letter is dated, and that the track crosses the continental divide. Rolling hills abound, but no mountains. The track winds easily along; but a water train has to be added to the usual supply trains, and the expense of construction is greatly increased by the distance which all material and all food and drink have to be drawn. Deep wells will in the future relieve the poverty and poisonousness of the surface water, whose alkali elements not only render it unfit for drink but impossible of use in the boilers of the engines.

Spite of the obstacles, however, the track marches on with magic rapidity. Ten to fifteen thousand men are at work on the grading of the three hundred miles between this point and Salt Lake valley. Following the completion of their work come the gangs of track-layers with their supply trains. First the ties or sleepers, brought up from below or out of the neighboring hills, and carried several miles ahead of the train by innumerable mule teams. Then rails and spikes are transferred to platform cars and pushed up to the end of the track; and by help of horse and a dozen practiced men, working like automatons with brains, the iron lengths are dropped in place, spiked down, the car rolled over them, the work repeated, and again and again, at the rate of from *three* to *eight* miles a day,—the

only limit yet found being the power of the completed road to bring up sleepers and rails to the supply trains of the contractors. The gangs of track-layers number in all from four hundred to five hundred; are picked men; live on the train or in tents which the train brings along as the track progresses; and are fed by the contractors in so good a style that no apologies were necessary in inviting our party of ladies and gentlemen to dine with them, and no hesitation felt on our part in accepting, nor any repentance at having accepted. It was one of the "squarest" meals of our whole trip so far.

For a few weeks now, Benton, in this Bitter Creek country, is the end of the open road, and here passengers and freight going west are transhipped, and here are temporarily gathered that motley crew of desperadoes, outcasts and reckless speculators, that are following the road's progress, and rioting in the license and coarseness of unorganized society. It is a most aggravated specimen of the border town of America, not inaptly called "Hell on Wheels," and unknown to all other civilizations or barbarisms. One to two thousand men, and a dozen or two women, are camped on the alkali plain in tents and board shanties; not a tree, not a shrub, not a blade of grass visible; the dust ankle deep as you walk through it, and so fine and volatile that the slightest breeze loads the air with it, irritating every sense and poisoning half of them; a village of a few variety stores and shops, and many restaurants and grog-shops; by day disgusting, by night dangerous;

almost everybody dirty, most filthy, and with the marks of lowest vice ; averaging a murder a day ; gambling and drinking, hurdy-gurdy dancing and the vilest of sexual commerce, the chief business and pastime of the hours,—this is Benton. Like its predecessors on the track, it fairly festers in corruption, disorder and death, and would rot, even in this dry air, should it outlast a brief sixty-day life. In a few weeks, its tents will be struck, its shanties razed, and with their dwellers will move on fifty or a hundred miles farther to repeat their life for another brief day. Where these people came from originally ; where they will go to when the road is finished, and their occupation is over, are both puzzles too intricate for me. Hell would appear to have been raked to furnish them ; and to it they will naturally return after graduating here, fitted for its highest seats and its most diabolical service.

Beyond this one hundred and fifty mile section of desert country, that marks the divide between the waters of the two oceans, the road crosses Green River and enters upon the descent into the Salt Lake basin. The country here changes rapidly ; it is broken by mountain ranges, and coursed by fresh rivers ; and every way becomes most interesting to the traveler, and most difficult for the railroad constructor. The section from Green River to the Salt Lake valley is the hardest part of the whole line of the Union Pacific Road to build ; heavy rock cuttings and embankments, sharp curves, and tunnels are necessitated ; yet there is nothing in it all so serious and expensive as the

work on the line of the railroads through and over the Alleghany Mountains, or worse than that the Boston and Albany Railroad encountered west of Springfield. The traveler will find pleasure, however, where the contractors met labor; the wonderful Church Butte, the charming high valley region about Fort Bridger, the narrow, rock-embraced canyons or gorges of Echo and Weber, the white-capped Wasatch Mountains,—all will awaken his enthusiasm and wonder, and lead him down to the settlements and civilization of the Mormon saints in a frame of pleasurable and curious excitement. He will need all its stimulus, however, to carry him contented over the new and wider desert country that the road will yet take him, along and beyond the Humboldt valley, through northern Nevada, and on to the now double-welcome glories of the Sierra Nevadas. And here upon the threshold of California, we leave him to find his own way.

Everybody inquires how the Pacific Railroad is built? Well or ill—as faithful as fast—befitting or betraying the royal endowment of the American people? A monosyllable will not answer the question. Well, with a qualification; ill, with a qualification. As well, certainly, as new roads are generally built in America—better surely than the North-western Road is built across Iowa. As well, too, as is consistent with such speed. The ties are plenty, a third thicker at least than is usual in the East; the rails as good as the Pennsylvania iron consciences and poverty will permit; and the adjustments all faithfully made and by competent

workmen. I could wish the bed had been thrown up a foot higher across the Plains, to escape the flood of possible heavy rains and the drift of snows; long sections are certainly imperfectly ballasted, or not at all; wooden bridges and culverts need to be rebuilt with stone; tressle-work should be replaced by embankments; and embankments need widening; many curves and circles should be cut across, the line straightened and shortened; and grades lowered or evened up. But the builders agree as to all this, except perhaps the height of the bed across the Plains, and are proceeding with the improvements and reconstructions as fast as the greater necessity for pushing on to the end will permit them. The only dispute there can be is as to the degree or extent which these completions and reconstructions are necessary or should be required.

The road has been and will be such a mine of wealth to its owners, they should be held by public and government to a strict performance of all their obligations,—they should give us in return for our gifts of money and land and privilege a thoroughly first-class road in every respect. But, on the other hand, exacting security for the perfection, they should be allowed generous time to do it in. The materials, stone, ballasting and timber, for all the work required, are upon the line; and when the rush of progress is over, and the road opened through, then the work of bringing up every part and every detail to perfection should be insisted upon by the one party, and cheerfully executed by the other. Self-interest invites the managers to this

fidelity ; they have found the road most profitable to build ; they are likely to find it as profitable to own and run ; and dependent as they must largely be upon the favor of public opinion and the protection and care of the government, aside from the necessity of having the road in thorough condition for its safe and profitable use, they will see how desirable it is they should leave no cause for complaint in the condition and management of the property.

No internal improvement was ever so generously endowed,—none was ever so wonderfully built. The government bounty was voted in ignorance of the difficulties and cost of the work. They have proven much less than was expected. The entire road from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean is about one thousand seven hundred miles long. The California company builds six hundred miles, the New York company about one thousand one hundred, and their junction is near Salt Lake, Congress voted sixteen thousand dollars government bonds per mile of plain country ; thirty-two thousand dollars per mile of more difficult territory ; and forty-eight thousand dollars per mile of the higher and rougher mountains passed over ; and it also authorized the companies to issue mortgage bonds of their own to equal amounts, which should take precedence in security of the government bonds. From one-half to two-thirds of the entire line is probably through “plain” country, yet, from a mixture of deception and ignorance, only about one-third was so counted. The average govern-

ment grant was thirty thousand dollars a mile, and the companies' first bonds, which have found ready sale, just doubled this sum as the cash provision for the construction of the road, or sixty thousand dollars per mile. But the actual cost has not probably been over half this, or not far in excess of the government grant alone,—certainly, with equipment, it will not average over forty thousand dollars per mile. This would leave a net cash profit on the building and opening of the road of thirty-four millions dollars. But, back of all this, the companies have the capital stock of the road, and own half the lands for a width of twenty miles along their tracks. There never was such a gigantic speculation on the American continent at least; and it is safe to predict that no other railroad will ever win such largess from the government as this has.

To show how deceived or mistaken the government agents were in the character of the work to be done, the traveler only need to look at the one hundred and fifty miles of road west from Cheyenne, and remember that this is the section for which they allowed the highest price of forty-eight thousand dollars a mile as heavy mountain work. In fact, it is about as fine a country to build a railroad through as lies on the face of the globe. It is one long, inclined plane, with a fine, disintegrated granite for its soil, worked by plow and scraper, and affording the solidest and most permanent road bed that exists in America. Only a few hills had to be cut through, or embankments



made, or streams crossed. The California company had no such rich streak of luck as this ; their forty-eight thousand dollars a mile section was grievously heavy mountain work, over the rough and broken Sierra Nevadas, requiring heavy rock cuttings and many tunnels. But they had, to make up for it, no "plain" or sixteen thousand dollars a mile track at all ; it was all forty-eight thousand dollars and thirty-two thousand dollars a mile, while many of their miles were as easy to build as the line across the Plains of the eastern section.

But no matter now ! Only by such appeal to cupidity have we got this continental roadway opened so soon,—a gift to our nationality, to our commerce, to our wealth, that is worth in five years more than it all cost. And now if the gigantic corporations that own and use it will but let our politics alone, give the country faithful service and at a fair price, and spend some of their profits in opening branch lines to Montana, Idaho, and Oregon, we will gladly give them welcome to their fortunes, and cry quits.

The path and the profits of the Pacific Railroad are likely to be for some time fresh subjects in our American lives, and so justify this long letter about them. We turn back the track to Cheyenne, and thence follow the mountains down to Denver to begin our real Summer Vacation in Colorado.

## II.

### TO DENVER AND THERE.

Where the Mountains Lie—The Stage Ride from Cheyenne to Denver—Scenes in the Stage-Coach at Night—Meals on the Road—How Denver Looks—Its Growth, Attainments, and Prospects—The Mountain View from the Town—Denver and Salt Lake City Rivals in Beauty of Location and Attraction for Travelers.

DENVER, Colorado, August, 1868.

IT is the old story over again—the railroads do not show you the best of the country. Their tracks run through the back yards in towns, and away from the hills and among the barren wastes of the interior. You no more see the Rocky Mountains in riding over the Pacific Railroad than you do New York in going through the Fourth Avenue tunnels, or Springfield in steaming by the mechanic shops and restaurants of Railroad Row. Nature graded a grand pathway for the locomotive across our Continent; the mountains fall back to the right of us and to the left of us,—so far away that we catch only the dim outline of their greatness,—leaving but here and there a quaint ruin of or majestic monument to her mighty labor, that civilization may go by steam from ocean to ocean. The great mountain center of the Continent lies below the present rail-

road line; it looms up in the distance at Cheyenne; it marches along the southern horizon as you sweep up and across the magnificent Laramie Plains; it cheers you through the rolling alkali dust of the Bitter Creek country; and it shoots its spurs in beauty and in power before you, as you seek, more slowly, a descending path into the Salt Lake basin. But would you behold it in all its majestic grandeur, its multiplied folds of height, with fields of ice and snow and rock, its beauty of infinite form and color, its wealth of flora and its wealth of gold and silver,—all the grand landscape and the hidden promise of the finest mountain region that the world holds,—then you must switch off from the main road, and come into the heart of Colorado, which is the very heart of our western Continent.

Bear in mind, too, that the great Pacific Railroad does not touch Colorado. It goes a few miles above the northern border. A branch road is now building from the main track at Cheyenne down to Denver, the capital and focal point of the state. While waiting for that to be finished, next year, we travel this one hundred miles in a six-horse coach. If we could do it all by daylight, nothing could be more pleasant. The road lies across the last fifty miles of the Plains,—through high rolling green prairies, cut every fifteen or twenty miles by a vigorous river, with border of rich and cultivated intervals, and line of trees marking its progress from mountain debouch to the slow-sinking, wide-reaching horizon,—to the right the grim mountains with towering tops of rock and snow,—to the left the un-

ending prairie ocean, with only an occasional cabin and scattered herd of cattle to break its majestic solitude and indicate human settlement; there is such magnificent out-dooriness in the continuous scene as no narrower or differently combined landscape can offer, and so long as the day lasts it is a thing of beauty and of joy. But it is a twenty hours' ride, and the stage arrangements make a night of it. And in stage-riding it is peculiarly true that it is the first night that costs. It is more intolerable than the combination of the succeeding half-dozen, were the journey prolonged for a week; the breaking-in is fearful,—the prolongation is bearable. The air gets cold, the road grows dusty and chokes, or rough and alarms you; the legs become stiff and numb, the temper edges; everybody is overcome with sleep, but can't stay asleep,—the struggle of contending nature racks every nerve, fires every feeling; everybody flounders and knocks about against everybody else in helpless despair; perhaps the biggest man in the stage will really get asleep, which doing he involuntarily and with irresistible momentum spreads himself, legs, boots, arms and head, over the whole inside of the coach; the girls screech, the profane swear; some lady wants a smelling bottle out of her bag and her bag is somewhere on the floor,—nobody knows where,—but found it must be; everybody's back hair comes down, and what is nature and what is art in costume and character is revealed,—and then, hardest trial of all, morning breaks upon the scene and the feelings,—everybody dirty, grimy, faint, "all to pieces," cross,—such a

disenchanted exhibition! The girl that is lovely then, the man who is gallant and serene,—let them be catalogued for posterity, and translated at once,—heaven cannot spare such ornaments; and they are too aggravating for earth.

Every ten miles we stop to change horses, and the driver, night or day, signalizes the approach to a station by a miniature war-whoop, that, as the Bostonians say of their great organ, “must be heard to be appreciated,”—it is certainly rather startling to new ears. Every thirty miles or so, a “home” station and a “square meal.” Dinner, supper and breakfast are all alike, and invariably generous and good, more uniformly so, indeed, than those along the railroad line from Chicago to the mountains. We missed willingly some of one sort of “home” stations, that we encountered out here three years ago in the “Across the Continent” ride,—single-roomed turf cabins, bare dirt floors, milkless coffee, rancid bacon, stale beans, and green bread, and “if you don’t like these, help yourself to mustard;” but we welcomed heartily, at the Laporte station, where is the most of a village on the road, our old host and hostess, with whom the Indians then prevailed on us, in their charming fashion, to pass a sweet and silent Sunday in their little retreat of Virginia Dale park in the mountains on the old road,—lady and gentleman now as then by diviner gifts than those of milliner or tailor. It was pleasant to see they had prospered, and got out among neighbors, where Indian raids, of which they had survived no fewer than eight in their solitary Dale

station, now abandoned, were less threatening; pleasant to have the ladies confirm the picture in "Across the Continent" on comparison with the original; pleasantest of all, perhaps, to find *she* had not forgotten our weakness for good victual. Those sup well who sup with our heroine of Virginia Dale, and if they would have especial grace and greeting, let them prove acquaintance with the "Colfax party."

The Vice-President often dwells on "the two kinds of welcome," and it was the other kind that we met at the next eating-place. Our stage was an-"extra," and "ran wild," and so came along un-awares. It was a trifle rough, therefore, to rouse a lone woman, at one o'clock in the night, to get us some supper or breakfast,—whichever you choose to call it. She could do it, she said, but she didn't quite like to. But who could resist the gallant Vice-President, whether pleading for ballot or breakfast; or the offers of help from the ladies; or the final suggestion of the driver? She wavered at the first; the second operated as a challenge to her capacity; and the third was irresistible. There is no king on his route like a stage driver,—he has a "dreadful winning way" with him, both for horses and women. The philosophy of it I do not understand, but the fact is universal and stubborn; he is the successful diplomat of the road; no meal can be begun till he is in place; and there are no vacant seats where he drives,—even the cold night air would not send our girls off his box, and inside, during this long ride. So, at two o'clock in the morning, we sat down to beef and ham and potatoes, tea and coffee, bread

and butter, pies, cakes and canned fruits,—not even the edges of the “squareness” of the meal rubbed off, and good humor everywhere.

We cross the rivers Cache-a-la Poudre,—which indicates that some Frenchman deposited his powder here aforetime,—St. Vrain, Big Thompson, Little Thompson, Boulder, Clear Creek, and finally the South Platte, to which all the others are tributary; and, having left Cheyenne at ten o'clock in the forenoon, gay and aggressive, we are tumbled out of the stage at Denver at eight the next morning, feeble and flabby, hungry and humble, with a dreadful “morning after” feeling and appearance and movement about us.

But the air of Denver, both inside and outside the houses, is very recuperating; we were soon toned up, and began to look about us. The town has spread out and settled down a good deal within three years. Things look less brisk, but more substantial and assured. The town “feels its oats” less and its dignity more. It has passed its hot and fickle days, when gamblers reigned, and “to be or not to be” was the everlasting question that fretted everybody who owned real estate, and with which they, in a sort of your-money-or-your-life manner, assaulted every stranger the moment he got out of the stage. Now, though trade is dull, and I have seen but one fight since I came to town, the Denverites all wear a fixed fact sort of air, and most of them are able to tell you, in a low and confidential chuckle, calling for envy rather than sympathy, that they own a quarter section just out there on

the bluff, to which the town is rapidly spreading, and where the capitol buildings and the fine residences will all be located, or a few corner lots down near the river, where the mills and the factories are destined to rise in the near future. Long lines of brick stores already give permanent and prosperous air to the town; its dry and its wet rivers are both newly bridged; irrigating ditches scatter water freely through streets, lawns and gardens, and now flowers and fruits, trees and vegetables lend their civilizing influences and their permanent attractions to the place; national banks emit their greenbacks and will "do" your little note most graciously at from one to two per cent a month and "a grab mortgage" behind it; Episcopal Bishop Randall from Boston has established an excellent school for girls; the Catholics have a larger educational establishment; the Methodists have the handsomest church and wear the best clothes; the Baptists and Congregationalists are lively and aggressive; the stores are closed Sundays; the nights are quiet and the police have a sinecure; free schools are organized; and three daily papers and two independent weeklies are published in the town. Kitchen girls are scarce and a dear luxury, with pay at fifty dollars to seventy-five dollars a month; but the consequence is that the cooking is excellent, and people live "first rate." The dwelling-houses are mostly small, a single story or a story and a half, but within are comforts and luxuries in abundance, and one house boasts a true Van Dyke. The emigrant and the traveler must "move on" by



Denver if he would get beyond the organization of the best American social and intellectual life.

I see I have spoken of Denver's "dry river," which calls for a parenthetical paragraph in explanation. The South Platte sweeps around the lower part of the town, broad and turbulent, of certain volume but uncertain track, useless for navigation but excellent for irrigation; but more sharply through the center of the business section lies Cherry Creek, now a broad bottom of dry sand, and only occasionally enlivened with any water. For years after the founding of the town, none appeared in its bed, and supposing it to have been deserted altogether, the people builded and lived in the bottom. Stores, shops and dwellings, streets and blocks appeared there; it was the heart of the town; the printing office was there, also the city records; but of a sudden, after a heavy rain, there came a flood pouring down the old river bed, not gradually and in rivulets, to warn, but a full-blown stream marched abreast with torrent force and almost lightning speed, reclaimed its own, and swept everything that had usurped its place into destruction. Since then, the people have paid respect to Cherry Creek; at some seasons of the year there is still a little water in its sands, but for the most part it is dry through the town; but nobody builds in the bed, and bridges over its path pay tribute to what it has been and may be again. Farther up its line, there is water in it now; but the sands consume and an irrigating ditch seduces it all away before it reaches the limits of the city.

Her central location, under the mountains, in the Plains section of the state, gives Denver a fine climate the year through; is favorable for trade to all parts of the state; secures to her the outgo and the income of the mining districts; makes her also the chief market for all the productions of the farming counties, and the focal point for all travel to and from the mountains, as well as north to the Railroad, and south to New Mexico; and endows her with a scene of mountain panoramic beauty, one hundred miles long, now touched with clouds, now radiant with sunshine, then dark with rocks and trees, again white with snow, now cold, now warm, but always inspiring in grandeur, and ever unmatched by the possession of any other city of Europe or America. The finest views of these mountains are obtained farther out in the Plains, where the more distant peaks come into sight, and the depth and variety, as well as the height and beauty of the range, are realized; and wider and older travelers than I,—who have seen the Cordilleras of South America from the sea, as well the Alps from Berne,—join in the judgment that no grand mountain view exists, that surpasses this, as seen from the high roll of the prairie just out of Denver, and over which the town is fast spreading, and so on from twenty to forty miles farther east. The one point of grandest view is located at the last “home station” on the Smoky Hill road, about thirty-five miles east from Denver, and along which the St. Louis Pacific Road will probably be built another year.

With these charms of climate and landscape, with

a settled and intelligent and prosperous population already of four thousand to five thousand, with business connections and facilities, social order and attractions, religious and educational institutions, all well organized, and fed by their own interior force,—growing from within out, and not simply by fresh importations of eastern material,—and holding the conceded position of the social, political and commercial capital of the state, Denver has a gratifying future of growth before it. Another year will bring through it the Pacific Railroad on the St. Louis route, connecting here with the branch of the main or central road that drops down from Cheyenne; a railroad is already commenced, also, towards the mining centers of the mountains by the Clear Creek valley; and it cannot be long before a southern road will be demanded, down from Denver along the base of the Mountains to southern Colorado and Santa Fe. Not unlikely, indeed, it will prove wiser to carry the first southern Pacific Railroad around this way, rather than to strike diagonally across to Santa Fe from the present terminus of the St. Louis Road, as is proposed, for this route is through a rich and already partly developed agricultural country, while that goes by half or wholly barren table-lands, not likely to be at all occupied for many years, and never capable like this of holding a large population.

Coal and iron and clay are found in the neighborhood; the hills give timber; the valleys every grain and vegetable and many fruits; and Denver cannot well escape a steady and healthy growth, and the destiny of becoming one of the most per-

manently prosperous, as it will be certainly one of the most beautiful of our great western interior cities. I rank it along with Salt Lake City. Both are off the main line of the continental railroad; but both have locations amid developed natural wealth and conceded natural beauty, that must command their future, and make it one of power and prosperity. Six hundred miles apart, with the continental range of mountains separating them, there can be no rivalry between them, save in social graces and pleasure attractions, and here the Mormon supremacy in Salt Lake will give Denver great advantages.

### III.

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF COLORADO.

The Back-bone of the Continent—The Mother Mountains of America—The Three Great Divisions of Colorado—Her Plains, Her Folds of High Mountain Ranges, Her Great Natural, Elevated Parks—North, Middle and South Parks; their Surroundings and their Beauties—The Unknown West of Colorado.

IN THE MOUNTAINS, Colorado, August, 1868.

As Pennsylvania is the key-stone in the Atlantic belt or arch of states, so is Colorado the key-stone in the grand continental formation. She holds the back-bone, the stiffening of the Republic. Lying a huge square block in the very center of the vast region bounded by the Mississippi valley on the east, the Pacific Ocean on the west, and British America and Mexico north and south, the continental mountain chain here dwells in finest proportions, exaggerates, puffs itself up and spreads itself around with a perfect wantonness and luxuriance of power,—great fountains of gold and silver, and lead and copper, and zinc and iron,—great fountains of water that pours itself in all directions through the whole interior of the Continent, feeding a wealth of agriculture that is little developed and never yet dreamed of even,—great fountains of

health in pure, dry and stimulating air,—great fountains of natural beauty; she may proudly bid the nation come to her for strength, for wealth, for vigor,—for rest and restoration,—and may well call her mountains the Sierra Madre, the Mother Mountains of the Continent.

Her geographical prominence and parentage are but type and promise of her future relations to the developed and developing life of the nation. Stretching two hundred and sixty miles north and south, and three hundred and seventy-five miles east and west, her territory has three natural subdivisions. The eastern third is of the Plains, and forms their western section,—a high rolling plateau from four thousand to five thousand feet above the sea level, richly watered by streams from the mountains, the strips along the rivers ripe for abundant harvests of grain and fruits and vegetables, the whole already the finest pasture land of the Continent, and with irrigation, for which the streams afford ready facility, capable of most successful cultivation,—beautiful in its wide, treeless sea of green and gray, with waves of land to break the monotony and lift the eye on to the great panorama of mountains, snow-slashed and snow-capped, that hangs over its western line through all its length of two hundred and sixty miles, and marks the second or middle division of the state. This is of about equal width,—mountains one hundred, one hundred and fifty, two hundred miles deep,—on, on to the west, till even this pure air tires of carrying the eye over peak on peak, over range on range,—you think

you must look over into Brigham Young's fertile valleys, and trace the Colorado River out of its grand mystery, even if the outer and faintest rim does not shadow forth the Sierra Nevada of California.

Starting from an elevation at the end of the Plains of five thousand to five thousand five hundred feet, these mountains rapidly carry you up to eight thousand, ten thousand, thirteen thousand, near to fifteen thousand feet above the sea level. Nine, ten, and twelve thousand feet peaks are scattered everywhere,—they are the mountains,—while those that mount to thirteen or fourteen thousand are plenty enough to be familiar, and are indeed rarely out of sight. They do not form a simple line, ascending from one and descending to another plain or valley, but are a dozen lines folded on, and mingled among each other, in admirable confusion; opening to let their superfluous waters flow out; closing to hold their treasures and defy the approach of man; gathering up all their strength, as it were, to make a peak or two of extra massive proportions, cold with snow and dreary with rock; and shading down into comparatively tender hills, that woo the forests and the flowers to their very summits. The line of peaks that divide the waters that flow to the Atlantic from those coursing into the Pacific,—“the divide,” par excellence,—twists and turns through the territory, very much in the style of a long and double-backed bow, making an almost entire circle sometimes, and then coming back to its mission as a north and south line. Within its huge folds are other “divides,” sepa-

rating the feeders to rival rivers of the same continental side, or rival feeders of the same river, and other ranges with peaks as high as the parent range; and within and among them all, the hills, as if tired of height and perpendicularity, give way to wide plains or prairies, with all the beauties and characteristics of plains and prairies outside the mountain region, and the added charm of holding little baby mountains of their own to diversify the landscape and feed forest and stream, while up and around them grow, through woods and grassy openings, the grand parent ranges that guard and enfold what are well called NATURAL PARKS.

These Parks are a distinctive and remarkable feature of this mountain center or belt of Colorado. They open upon the traveler at frequent intervals in charming unexpectedness; rich with grass and water, with trees and flowers, with soft beauty of outline and warm beauty of color, in most admirable contrast to the rough rocks and white snow of the high ranges around. Most of these Parks are, of course, petite,—little wide valleys around the heads of single streams, or the conjunctions of several, or the homes of sweet lakes; but there are four great ones that mark the phenomenon and give the name. These are North Park, Middle Park, South Park and San Luis Park, varying in size from twenty by fifty miles to one hundred by two hundred, or say from Rhode Island to Massachusetts,—little episodes and interjections among these mountains, by whose size, as thus stated, you may take in some sense of the extent and



majesty of the region, of which they are a sub-feature, as a whole.

The North Park extends up to the northern line of the territory and within thirty or forty miles of the Pacific Railroad ; through and out of it flow the head waters of the North Platte ; its streams are thicker with trout, and its sage brush and buffalo grass and wooded hill-sides offer more deer and wolves and antelopes and bears than are found in the lower and more frequented Parks, but its soil is colder as its elevation is higher, and its charms of color and vegetation more stunted. Middle Park lies next below, and separated by a single but high sub-range of the main mountains. This is fifty miles wide by seventy miles long, and as the continental divide sweeps around on its eastern side, all its waters flow into the Colorado of the West and so into the Pacific. But it embraces within itself several high ranges of hills and two or three different valleys. The great peaks of the territory lie marshaled around it,—Long's Peak, Gray's Peaks, and Mount Lincoln, north-east, south-east and south-west, each from thirteen thousand to fourteen thousand five hundred feet high ; and snow-topped mountains circle its whole area. Milder and more beautiful in landscape than the North, it yet falls behind its neighbor on the other side, the South Park, which is thirty miles wide and sixty long, and, fellowshipping with the North Park, comes into the inner tail of the bow, carries the continental divide on its west, and furnishes the waters of the Arkansas and the South Platte.

This (the South) is the more beautiful of the Parks and the better known. Mining discoveries within and around it have opened roads through it, and bordered it with settlements. It offers a remarkable combination of the beauties of the Plains and those of the Mountains. They mingle and mix in charming association. Wide areas of rich prairie open out before the level eye; upraise it or turn one side, and grand snowy mountains carry the sight up among the clouds; and between these types of natural beauty are plentiful shadings in gently rolling hills, long level banks, thick and diversified forests, bright and bountiful streams,—all the grand panorama of natural beauty that hill and valley, mountain and plain, winter and summer, snow and verdure, trees and rocks, water and waste can produce in combination and comparison, is here spread before the spectator, not from a single spot or in a single hour of his travel, but from mile to mile, from day's journey to day's journey, ever the same various scene, yet ever shifting in its kaleidoscopic alliances and changes.

The San Luis Park lies along and around the Arkansas and its tributaries in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico, is the largest and perhaps the most varied of the series of great Parks, centers about a grand lake, and is rich alike in agricultural and mineral promise. The Indians have robbed us of our promised peep into its lines, and we know it only by its kinship to those we have visited, and the enthusiastic descriptions of those to whom it is familiar. But the South Park

as yet takes the palm among the Coloradians, perhaps only, however, because it is the more accessible, and its beauties more thoroughly explored. Certainly it lies more closely in the lap of the great mountains; and Mount Lincoln and Pike's Peak, perhaps the most noted and remarkable of all the high peaks of the territory, sentinel it north and south, feed it from their snows, protect it from the rough winds, shadow it from the sharp suns.

In spite of these great elevations, the traveler carries summer skies as he keeps summer scenes with him at this season in most of his excursions among the mountains and their parks in Colorado. We borrow our ideas of mountain travel and mountain hights from Switzerland and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Among them both, vegetation ceases at about five thousand feet above the sea level, and perpetual snow reigns among the Alps at seven thousand to eight thousand feet, and would in the White Mountains if they went as high. But here in these vaster mountain regions than either of Western America, the hills themselves only begin to rise from the Plains at an elevation of five thousand five hundred feet. And at that hight, though the nights are always deliciously cool, the summer's days are as warm as, if not warmer than they ever are in the valleys of the New England States, and snow enough for sleighing or to force the cattle to shelter or other food than the prairie grass is only a rare chance,—a memory of the oldest, or a dream of the youngest inhabitant. At six thousand or seven thousand

feet, in the valleys of the mountains, the small grains and the tenderer vegetables are successfully cultivated, and at seven thousand five hundred and eight thousand five hundred feet, potatoes, turnips and cabbages thrive. The Middle Park ranges from seven thousand seven hundred to nine thousand feet high in its level sections, and the South, from six thousand five hundred to seven thousand five hundred, while the higher plains and embraced hills of both run up to ten thousand and even eleven thousand feet. Yet grass grows richly and abundantly through both; hay is a great natural crop, and is cured already for all the wants that can be reached; and in the lower parts of the South Park, cattle winter out of doors, and the smaller grains and hardier vegetables are grown with great success and profit. Flowers are beautiful and abundant up to ten thousand or eleven thousand feet,—so beautiful and abundant that I must reserve them for special description,—the largest and best timber grows at nine thousand to eleven thousand feet, and trees do not cease till you pass above eleven thousand five hundred feet, while the real, absolute and perpetual snow line,—such snow and ice as are found universally in Switzerland at eight thousand feet,—is not reached at all in these mountains. At twelve thousand feet, it begins to lie in great patches on the shaded sides of the hills, or in deep ravines, and goes on to multiply in such form as the mountains rise to their greatest height at fourteen thousand to fourteen thousand five hundred feet. But

it absolutely covers no mountain peak; the tops of Gray's Peaks and Mount Lincoln, the highest points in the whole region, are dry and bare, at least at midday, through August, though in reaching them you may go over snow fields twenty or thirty feet deep and miles long, though nearly every morning's sun may glance brilliantly off the freshly whitened peaks of all the high mountains in sight, and though it makes everywhere and at all times a significant feature in all the landscape visions of the country. The full mountains of snow and the vast rivers of ice that belong to Switzerland are not here, and are certainly missed by the experienced mountain traveler; but for their absence we have many compensations,—a more varied and richer verdure, a wider range of mountains, with greater variety of form and color, these elevated Parks, that have no parallel anywhere for curious combination of landscape feature and beauty and practical use, a climate in summer that fosters comfort and makes high mountain travel both much more possible and agreeable, and an atmosphere that, in purity and dryness, in inspiring influence upon body and mind, can find no match in any part of Europe, nor elsewhere in America.

The third or western great division of Colorado is comparatively unknown. Explorers have crossed it here and there; adventurous miners have penetrated into this and that of its valleys; but it holds no real population, and its character is known only in a general way. The great mountain ranges shade down irregularly through it into the vast

interior basin of the West, instead of breaking off almost abruptly, as they do on their eastern side, into the level plains; the Grand, the White, the Green and the Gunnison, the great feeders of the Colorado of the West, slash freely through it, often by narrow and unapproachable gorges, often too through wide and rich valleys; many a high park, with rough sage brush and tall grass, spreads itself out, cold and dreary in the north, warmer and more fertile in the south. Many a fable of rich mines, of beautiful valleys, of broken and ruined mountains,—the debris of great conflicts of nature,—many a deep faith in untold wealth and unnumbered beauties do I hear of and about this section of the territory; but the fact remains that it has but few settlers and no especial history,—and I gather the conclusion that it is in every way less interesting to traveler, less enticing to speculator or settler, than the middle and eastern divisions. New and thorough explorations are in progress through its lines; another year will add something to our knowledge of its valleys and mountains; but for the present it is perhaps as much unknown land as any section of equal size in the United States.

## IV.

### TRAVEL AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

From Denver up into the Mountains—How the Honest Miners Travel, and Colorado Families Make Summer Excursions—The Clear Creek Valleys—The Scene of Beirstadt's Storm in the Rocky Mountains—The Outfit for a Trip to Middle Park—We Celebrate the Mule—The Upper Valley of Clear Creek, and up the Mountain Side—The Flowers, the Shrubs, and the Trees of the Higher Regions.

TOP OF BERTHOUD PASS, August, 1868.

GOING into the mountains from Denver, the traveler has choice of several roads. To the north he passes up Boulder Creek to Boulder City and its sub-villages and mining camps; more directly west are the Clear Creek valley routes, one by Golden City, and on to North Clear Creek, with Black Hawk and Central City, that run into each other and form the chief mining town of the territory, and passing from here over to South Clear Creek, with Idaho, Fall River, Mill City, Empire and Georgetown on its line,—this being the daily stage route, and the other, farther south, going up the Mount Vernon road, and striking down into the South Clear Creek valley below Idaho; while still farther south, where Bear Creek and Turkey Creek

come out of the mountain range, is the road that leads up and through the South Park country. At this season all these roads are good,—for mountain roads; in most part quite excellent and much traveled, and kept in repair by tolls collected under territorial charters. Fifty miles is the end of the stage line and wagon road at Georgetown; and a like distance on either road takes you into the midst of the high mountains, and to the foot of the continental range. The Boulder and both the Clear Creek roads all connect by cross-roads in the mountains; but there is no direct connection between the South Park and the upper Clear Creek valleys save by trails. A tri-weekly stage-wagon goes direct from Denver into the South Park region to supply its villages with mails and carry passengers.

All these roads introduce one delightfully to close companionship with the mountain scenery,—first through the long, wide prairie; then into narrow valleys; occasionally a bold gorge or canyon and a broken mountain; up and among and over high hills, commanding majestic views of higher summits beyond; through little wooded parks or open fields, where grain grows and flocks feed, and somebody keeps “a ranch;” by lively streams with tangles of willows and hops and clematis, and fruity shrubs up the drier and higher banks; among flowers everywhere, growing finer and plentier the higher you climb; out and in forests of various species of cotton-wood and evergreen, often brown and dead through wasting fires that have swept the



hill-sides, or half cleared for the consuming rage of the gold and silver furnaces, but still a rich possession of beauty and wealth for the country; under a sun always searching with heat, but through an atmosphere growing rarer and rarer and drier and drier, and ever fresh and cool,—the day's ride is thus a perpetual pleasure and surprise to the new-comer.

We scattered in disorder on our first trip to the mountains. The Vice-President and the Governor took the stage and fulfilled several appointments to make speeches. Governor Hunt of the Territory made up a camping excursion for the young ladies, with carriage, saddle-horses and outfit of tents, blankets, cooking-stove and "grub" in bulk, and moved leisurely up by the Mount Vernon road,—reckless of time or taverns, and stopping wherever hunger or night overtook them. That patriarch of the country, General Pierce, and myself, drove "a one-horse shay" by the same route; and when we grew hungry, we picked out a brook and a choice lot of grass, turned the horse loose for an hour, and lay among the flowers and disposed of huge piles of bread and butter and meat, that we had brought with us, after the fashion of the country. This independent camping habit is almost the rule with home travelers here. It grew up with the necessities of the early settlements and the roving, straggling ways of the miners. The taverns are not now frequent or good; the climate favors the outdoor life at this season; and with provision in abundance, blankets, a coffee-pot, a

frying-pan, and a sack of flour and a side of bacon, either in a wagon, or packed on an extra horse, if you are journeying in the saddle, even pleasure-travelers find it much the more comfortable and decidedly the more independent mode, while to the old settler, and especially to a miner, it is altogether a matter of course. One of these hangs his blanket and his coffee-pot and frying-pan, with a joint of meat and a bit of bread, around his saddle, and without extra animal or companion, is good for a week's journey among the mountains. What he lacks for food he finds in the streams or woods, or buys at the occasional ranch, and at night a deserted cabin, which is nearly always at hand, where miners have been and are not, or a roadside tree and an open camp fire furnish him shelter and warmth. He sleeps the sleep of the tired, and if it rains and he gets wet, the renewed fire dries him, and the climate never encourages colds. So with the multiple of our single traveler; with companions conveniences and comforts increase, but the fashion is the same; and whole families,—mothers and babies included,—will, with covered wagon and a saddle-horse or two, make a pleasure visit to the mountains, after this fashion, and live literally on the country for days and weeks, in delightful and refreshing companionship with Nature. It was this sort of life that we were all entering upon, in all its strange novelty and stimulating influences.

We found the Clear Creek valleys generally brisk and beautiful. Between mining and milling

and the late floods, the north one is terribly torn to pieces, and looks rough and ragged. Black Hawk and Central City may be good places to get gold in, but there can be no genuine homes there. The valley is too narrow, a mere ravine, and all beauty is sacrificed to use; though after all beauty is truly use,—but to the mere use of washing out gold. Below and above, the valley widens and is finer; but over the divide on the South Branch, there is a very charming country to look upon and live in. Below Idaho, gulch mining, which is pretty lively and successful still, despoils the prospect so far as man can; but the dozen or fifteen miles from Idaho up by Fall River, Mill City and Empire to Georgetown, is quite the nicest bit of the inhabited portion of the mountains. The valley is not wide, indeed you can heave a stone across it in the narrower, and fire a rifle from hill to hill at its wider parts; but it breaks out frequently into little nooks of plateaus or bars; it opens up into seductive side valleys or canyons, and it winds and turns about, and sends up its high mountain walls in form and manner, to present a constantly varying but ever beautiful scene. At the upper end, winter confronts you in snow-covered peaks; below, nature looks warm and summer-like; and though the valley is from seven thousand five hundred to eight thousand five hundred feet high, the days are like June and October, and the winter is not long or severe. Till you reach Georgetown, where the hills shut in the valley sharply, and the rich silver section has its center,

there is not much mining, and the villages are but neighborhoods of six to a dozen houses each. Idaho and Fall River have good hotels, and are favorite summer resorts. The former has a wonderful hot soda spring that furnishes most refreshing and health-giving baths. Over it rise a family group of three peaks, distinguishable in all mountain views, and known as the Chief, Squaw and Papoose, and up from the valley here you rise to Chicago Lake and Chicago Mountain, familiar as the foreground scene in Bierstadt's "Storm in the Rocky Mountains."

All these mountains go sharply up from two to four thousand feet above the valley, often past the timber line, and end in snow or bare, grim rocks. They offer unending fascination to the lover of mountain-climbing and mountain views; while to lie on the grassy banks just above the river,—that, in practical parenthesis, it should be noted, runs swift and strong down the rapid descent of the valley, and is full of "water power,"—in the warm sun, and look through the snowy fleece of grasshoppers, that with outstretched wings fill the air, up and among them,—masses of forest and rock and patches of snow,—to the line of brightened blue sky they border,—this is just comfort and rest, and is worth the coming to experience.

It was from here that, sending wagons and women, tents and trunks, back to Denver, and coming down as the miners say to the "bed-rock" of flannel overshirts and a pocket comb for personal baggage, we started with a select masculine party for a week's trip over into the Middle Park.

We had a number of welcome Colorado volunteers for this expedition. There were a full dozen of us that gathered after breakfast on mule and horseback in the last camp of Governor Hunt and the young ladies, far up the Clear Creek valley, above Empire. The latter went back, we forward, led by Governor Hunt and Indian Agent Oakes. Charley Utter, a famous mountaineer, trapper, Indian scout, rover, such a character as only the American border can breed, small and tough, wiry and witty, intelligent and handsome,—alike at home in your parlor or an Indian hut,—and to whom all these mountains and parks are as familiar as your own paternal acres are to yourself; he and his assistant, Franklin Ashley, provided our animals and outfit generally, and also came along with us, to guide and help us in our new and strange life. Two extra mules and a horse carried our blankets and provisions and cooking utensils, and the personal baggage of those not weaned yet from carpet bags.

Some experience as a traveler myself, and more valuable advice from those of larger, had taught me to rise superior to such aristocratic impediments. Indeed, it proved I was outfitted in quite a model way, and had more of what was necessary and less of what was not, than others of the inexperienced in camp and mountain travel. First, woolen stockings and winter under clothing; and of these, an extra set, with two extra handkerchiefs and two towels, soap, comb and tooth-brush and slippers, only moderately filled a pair of light saddle-

bags on my own animal. Over the undershirt was worn a dark and thick cassimere shirt, with turn-over collar of same and pocket in breast, which, coming nowhere in contact with the body, may be worn for weeks without disrespect to your washer-woman. A pair of very thick, high top, riding boots, of extra size, my last winter's thick pantaloons and heavy sack coat, and an old soft hat, flexible as a rag, and answering as well for a night-cap, completed my clothing. No vest or waist-coat, no suspenders; a strap around the waist held things together, and carried a revolver and a tin cup. Over the saddle-bags behind were strapped a thin woolen overcoat,—it better have been thick,—and a loose rubber cloth coat; both which were frequently in use, and were always valuable at night; and as often in mid-day they had the company around the saddle of the sack coat, and I rode under the warm sun in pantaloons and shirts. It was a neat, complete and compact personal outfit; everything that was needed for a trip of two or three weeks, and the only modification I would make, in going again, would be to substitute a pair of old shoes for the slippers, and to have the rubber overcoat so modified that it would closely cover the legs in the saddle down to the boot-tops. All this was carried on and around my own saddle; my bedding alone went on the pack animals, and this consisted of two pairs of heavy blankets, a buffalo robe, a rubber blanket and a pillow,—all strapped into a tight roll or bundle,—no more than one restless sleeper needs in the cold nights of these out-

door mountains, but equally abundant for two square and fair sleepers who will turn over at one and the same time and don't kick the clothes off.

My mule,—did you ever ride a mule? There is no other experience that exactly fits one for this. As far as a mule's brains go, he is pretty sensible,—and so obstinate! But it takes a long while to beat a new idea into his head, and when it dawns on him, the effect is so overpowering that he just stops in amazed bewilderment, and won't move on again until he is relieved of the foreign consciousness, and gets back to his own original possessions. The whole process is startlingly human; it inspires you with faith in the idea of the transmigration of souls. I know *so* many people who must have been mules once, or will be,—else there is no virtue in the fitness of things! But my mule belonged to the best of the race; he was prudent,—he never went in any doubtful places until somebody else had gone before and proved the way; he was very patient,—he would always stop for me to get off, or to get on; he was very tough,—my spurs never seemed to annoy him one atom, and my riding him didn't wear any skin off of *his* backsides, not a bit. But after we grew acquainted, and he came to appreciate the more delicate shades of my character, we got on charmingly together for the first half of the day; in the afternoon, when he grew lazy and tired, and I nervous, we often had serious discussions,—sometimes with sticks,—but he generally got the best of the argument.

If a well-broken Indian pony or a "broncho"

(a California half-breed horse) can be got, either is probably better than a mule ; more springy in tread and quicker in movement, and equally careful in mountain-climbing and fording streams and ditches ; but otherwise, the mule is the better animal for your work on these expeditions. A "States" horse can't stand the hard riding and tough climbing, and besides must have grain to keep him up, while the mule and the Indian and "broncho" ponies will live on the rich grasses of the country. The latter are apt to be wilful and wicked, and should only be taken, in preference to the mules, upon good references as to character and a trial to boot.

But "get up, Jenny." We are falling fast in the rear. The narrow valley rapidly narrows, and becomes a defile, a gorge, wooded and flowered, rock-strewed and briskly watered,—a wild Alpine scene. The mountains rise sharp and sheer, one thousand and two thousand feet above the road, and wide walls of red granite hang over it. The stream turns and twists and foams, and we follow a half-made road along, over, in its rugged path. There was an attempt made a few years ago to build a stage road through the mountains and over into Utah by this route ; many thousand dollars were spent upon it ; but it was found too big a job, and it is passable now for only a few miles farther on. It takes the traveler into and among rich mountain beauties ; even to come up here and go back, without an objective point beyond, is abundant recompense.

After four or five miles of this road, we turn



sharply from it up an abrupt mountain trail; in single file, along a mere path on a steep hill-side, a mis-step of the mule would send animal and rider rolling over and over among the sparse trees down the declivity,—but mules don't mis-step, and even the top-heavy pack jacks,—a mountain on a mole-hill, indeed,—carried their burden and themselves unharmed to the top. The thin and thinning air offered severer trial, however, and the beasts struggled like huge bellows for wind, and trembled beneath us in the effort to take in enough to keep going; to get off and walk was to undergo the same trial ourselves, and walking or riding, we had every few rods to stop and adjust the lungs of man and beast to the rare and growing rarer air. There was temptation to stop, too, in the widening view of the upper mountains; their snowy fields and gray or red or brown walls and peaks lifted into sight, on all sides, close and familiar, distant and stranger, but making us feel, for the first time, their real companionship,—that nearness to great and sublime nature that awes and uplifts like the presence of God himself.

Passing the sharp mountain side, we come, at a hight of ten thousand feet, to pleasant little park openings, ascending by easy grade, half-wooded, and whose bright grass and abundant flowers and deep evergreens tell of fertile soil and protecting hights around. Such spots are frequent in all these high mountain ranges, and are exceeding fair to look upon. They are in their glory at this season; it is but a little while back to last year's snows, and

a few weeks forward to another wintry embrace; and they make the most of their stinted time. So in July and August they compress the growth and the blossom of the whole year; and we see at once flowers that are passed and flowers that are yet to come in the Plains below; dandelions and buttercups, violets and roses, larkspurs and harebells, painter's brush and blue gentian,—these and their various companions of spring, summer and autumn, here they all are, starring the grass, drooping over the brook, improving every bit of sunshine among the trees, jealous of every lost hour in their brief lives.

I wish I could repeat the roll of this army of beauties for the benefit of my flower-learned readers; I know most of them very well by sight, as the lad said of his unlearned alphabet, but cannot call them by name. Blue and yellow are the dominant colors; of the former several varieties of little bell and trumpet-shaped blossoms, pendant along stalwart stalks; again, a similar shaped flower, but more delicate,—a little tube in pink and white, seems original here; and of the golden hues, there are babies and grand-babies of the sun-flower family in every shade and shape. One of these, about the size of a small tea-saucer, holds a center stem or spike of richest maroon red, with deepest yellow leaves flaring away from it,—each color the very concentration and ripeness of itself, as if dyed at the very fountain head. The harebell is at home everywhere; drooping modestly and alone on the barren and exposed mountain side at eleven thou-

sand or twelve thousand feet, as well as in the protected parks among all its rivals; but the fringed gentian is more fastidious, and grows only where nature is richer, but then in such masses, with such deep blueness and such undeviating uprightness of stem, as to prove its birthright here. The painter's brush, as familiarly called here, is a new flower to me; something like the soldier's pompon in form, it stands stiff and distinct on a single stalk, about six inches tall, with three inches' length and one inch in thickness or diameter of flower, in every shade of red from deepest crimson to pale pink, and again in straw colors from almost white to deep lemon. We picked on a single morning's ride seven of different shades of red. A bunch of the brightest of this flower, with sprinkling of those of milder hues and a few grasses, such as could be gathered in five minutes in many a patch of Alpine meadow we passed through, was enough to set a flower-lover crazy with delight. It was a beacon, a flame of color, and would make a room aglow like brilliant picture or wood fire on the hearth. But perhaps the most bewitching of the flowers we discovered was a columbine, generous but delicate, of pale but firm purple and pure white,—it was very exquisite in form and shading. Higher up, where only mosses could grow for rock and snow, these were in great variety and richness, with white, with blue and with pink blossoms.

All this wonderful wealth and variety of flower is marked with strength but not coarseness; the colors are more deep and delicate than are found in

garden flowers; and though frost and snow may stiffen their blossoms every morning,—for at ten thousand feet high and above, the temperature must go down to freezing every night,—the dryness of the air preserves them through their season, and they keep on growing and flowering until their September and October winter fairly freezes them out.

There is no such variety and beauty in the forests of the Rocky Mountains as those of the East and the extreme West both offer. The oak, the maple, the elm, the birch, all hard woods are unknown. Pines, firs and spruces of various species, and the cotton-wood, a soft maple or poplar, with delicate white wood and a pale green and smooth leaf, are all that this region can offer for trees. Nor are these generally of large size. The forests seem young and the individual trees small, even by the side of those of New England; there is no hint among them of the giants of the Pacific coast. The probability is that they are young, that the Indians kept them well burned off, and that, with settlement and civilization, in spite of the wanton waste now in progress, and against which there should be some speedy protection, the forest wealth will increase. Perhaps not in these first years, but by and by, when coal takes the chief place for fuel, and self-interest and legislation work out their care of the trees, and prevent devastating fires. But many a fine grove of thick and tall pines, that would warm the heart of any ship-builder, have we passed through; and their deep colors and firm forms, contrasting with the

light and free-moving cotton-wood, give a pleasing and animated life to the forest landscape.

But the silver spruce is the one gem of the trees; a sort of first cousin of the evergreen we call the balsam fir in our New England yards, but more richly endowed with beauty of shape and color. It is scattered plentifully through these mountain valleys, and looks as if a delicate silver powder had been strewn over its deep green needles, or rather as if a light white frost had fallen all upon and enshrouded it; and you cannot help wondering why the breeze does not shake the powder off, or the sun dissipate the frost, so ever present is the one illusion or the other. But it holds its birthright persistently,—a soft white-blue-green combination of positive power that comes into the rather hardish gray neutral coloring of the general landscape with most agreeable, even inspiriting effects. This and another spruce often throw themselves into a very charming form of growth; gathering around an old pine, they will shoot up numerous spires, thin and tall, thicker and shorter, and so shade down to a close, spreading mass in a wide semicircle around,—a bit of natural cathedral-like posturing in tree and shrub life, so often repeated as to suggest art, so effective as to call out the delight and envy of every landscape artist who sees it. Everywhere among these high mountains, in barren rather than in fertile spots, we unexpectedly find the “Mahonia Holly,” a favorite but winter dying shrub of our eastern lawns; they call it here the Oregon grape, for it

bears a little berry, and it is evidently killed to the root every winter, for it gets only a few inches of growth, and I do not find it massed at all. But in its freely scattered little specimens, its deep, smooth and hard green leaves kept company with us until we had passed the timber line, and come out among the snow fields.

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## THE MIDDLE PARK.

The Berthoud Pass—"Such a Getting Down" Hill—Our First Night in Camp—The Middle Park and Across it—An Indian Rescue and a Civilized Reception—The Mountain Raspberries—The Hot Douche Springs—Trout Fishing—Life with the Ute Indians.

HOT SPRINGS, Middle Park, August, 1868.

AFTER three or four hours' hard riding, from the upper Clear Creek, we suddenly came out of the trees into an open space of hardy green, bordered by snow, a gap or sag in the mountains,—and behold we are at the top of Berthoud Pass. The waters of the Atlantic and Pacific start from our very feet; the winds from the two oceans suck through here into each other's embrace; above us the mountain peaks go up sharp with snow and rock, and shut in our view; but below and beyond through wide and thick forests lies Middle Park, a varied picture of plain and hill, with snowy peaks beyond and around. To this point, at least, I would advise all pleasure travelers to Colorado to come; it is a feasible excursion for any one who can sit in the saddle; it can be easily made with return in a day from Empire, Georgetown or even Idaho; and

it offers as much of varied and sublime beauty in mountain scenery, as any so comparatively easy a trip yet within our experience possibly can.

But to follow us down into the Park is another and tougher affair; the Colorado ladies do it occasionally, but it needs real strength and endurance and an unflinching enthusiasm. The descent is sharp and rocky, and thick with timber, and worse, wet and miry. Bayard Taylor, who came over in June, found the path heavy with snow, and impassable to any but heroic travelers; now the snows are gone, and it is dryer than at any other season, but it is a rough and hard descent, almost perpendicular in steepness at times, and full of treacherous holes of water and mire. But we all got through without disaster, and found relief about two o'clock in an open, grassy meadow, with a trout brook on its border. The order to camp was grateful; animals were turned loose, and we lolled in the sunshine, made and drank coffee, and ate our lunch of bread and butter, ham and canned peaches.

But we were not in the Park yet, and after an hour's rest, we remounted and moved on,—on, on, the road seemed interminable, through thick woods, over frequent morass and occasional mountain stream; deceptive in glimpse of park that was not the Park; all, save our irrepressible mountain leaders, weary with the long, rough ride, and eager for the end. It was near dark, after traveling from twenty to twenty-five miles in all, when we stopped for the night, in the woods, just without the open section of the Park. A bit of meadow with tall



grass was at hand for the animals, and, relieved of saddles and packs, away they went, without let or hindrance, to enjoy it. The only precaution taken is to leave the lariat, a rope of twenty to thirty feet long, dragging at their necks, by which to catch them the more easily in the morning. Only a portion of the herd are thus provided, however. They rarely stray away far from camp; and if they should, these people make little of an hour or two's hunt to find them, which they are quite sure of doing wherever the best grass grows. The animals are picketed only when there is danger from the Indians, or a prompt start is necessary.

A big fire is soon blazing; a part prepare the supper,—tea and coffee, bacon, trout, potatoes, good bread and butter, and, to-night, a grouse soup, the best use Governor Hunt can make of an old bird he shot on the road, to-day, and very good use it proved, too, by help of tin pail, potatoes and butter;—others feed the fire, bring the water, and prepare the camp for sleeping. An old canvass cloth serves for table; we squat on our blankets around it, and with tin cups, tin plates, knife and fork and spoon, take what is put before us, and are more than content. Eating rises to a spiritual enjoyment after such a day; and the *Trois Freres* or *Delmonico* does not offer a “squarer meal” than Governor Hunt. The “world's people” make their beds against a huge tree, and cut and plant boughs around the heads to keep out the cold wind; but the old campers drop their blankets anywhere around the fire; and after going back over the day and forward to

the morrow in pleasant chat, sitting around the glowing mass of flame and coal, we crawl in under our blankets, in a grand circle about the now smouldering logs, say our prayers to the twinkling stars up through the trees, and,—think of those new spring beds invented in Springfield!

We broke up housekeeping and started into the Park by nine o'clock the next morning. It isn't an easy matter to make an earlier start, when we have to carry our homes with us; cook and eat breakfast; wash the dishes; catch the animals; pack up beds and provisions; clean up camp, and reconstruct not only for a day's journey, but for a family moving. A short ride brought us into miles of clear prairie, with grass one to two feet high, and hearty streams struggling to be first into the Pacific Ocean. This was the Middle Park, and we had a long twenty-five miles ride northerly through it that day. It was not monotonous by any means. Frequent ranges of hills break the prairie; the latter changes from rich bottom lands with heavy grass, to light, cold gravelly uplands, thin with bunch grass and sage bush; sluggish streams and quick streams alternate; belts of hardy pines and tender looking aspens (cotton-wood) lie along the crests or sides of hills; farther away are higher hills fully wooded, and still beyond, "the range" that bounds the Park and circles it with eternal snows. The sun shines warm; there are wide reddish walls of granite or sandstone along many of the hills; some of the intervalles are rich with green grass; and the sky is deep blue; and yet the pre-

vailing tone and impression of the Park is a coldish gray. You find it on the earth; you see it in the subdued, tempered, or faded greens of leaf and shrub and grass; it hangs over the distant mountains; it prevails in the rocks; you feel it in the air,—a certain sort of stintedness or withholding impresses you, amid the magnificence of distance, of height and breadth and length, with which you are surrounded, and which is the first and greatest and most constant thought of the presence.

We scattered along wildly enough; some stopping to catch trout; others humoring lazy mules and horses; others to enjoy at leisure the novel surroundings,—meeting, with fellow-feeling, for lunch and the noon rest, but dividing again for the afternoon ride. All had gone before,—leaders, guides, packs, and were out of sight,—when my friend and especial companion on this trip, Mr. Hawkins of Mill City, of Springfield raising and relation, and myself rose over the hill that looked down into the valley that was our destination. It was a broad, fine vision. Right and left, several miles apart, ran miniature mountain ranges,—before, six miles away, rose an abrupt gray mountain wall; just beneath it, through green meadow, ran the Grand River; up to us a smooth, clean, gradual ascent; along the river bank, a hundred white tents, like dots in the distance, showed the encampment of six to eight hundred Ute Indians, awaiting our party with “heap hungry” stomachs; in the upper farther corner, under the hill-side, a faint mist and steam in the air located the famous

Hot Springs of the Middle Park,—the whole as complete a picture of broad, open plain, set in mountain frame, as one would dream of. It spurred our lagging spirits, and we galloped down the long plane, whose six miles seemed to the eye not a third so long in this dry, pure air.

Reaching the river, through the Indian encampment, whose mongrel curs alone gave fighting greeting, it looked deep and was boisterous; our animals hesitated; and we thought sympathetically of Bayard Taylor's sad fortune in making this hard journey into the Middle Park to see and try the Hot Springs, and then being obliged by the flood to content himself with a distant view from this bank of the river. But our comrades had gone over; and the only question was where. Looking for their track, directly there came galloping to our relief a gayly costumed Indian princess,—we were sure she was,—bare-backed for her haste to succor, and full of sweet sympathy for our anxiety, and tender smiles for our—attractiveness in misfortune. Plunging boldly into what seemed to us the deepest and swiftest part of the stream,—as doubtless it was,—she beckoned us to follow, with every enticing expression of eye and lips and hand; and follow we, of course, did,—had it been more dangerous we should,—and by folding ourselves up on the highest parts of our animals, we got through without serious wetting. But it proved that we crossed in the wrong place, and that our beautiful Indian princess, with beads and feathers and bright eyes and seductive ways, was only a plain young

“buck,”—not even a maiden, not so much as a squaw, not, to come down to the worst at once, so near to glory and gallantry as a relationship to the Chief. Nothing less than the welcome we had from one of the best women of Colorado,—whom we parted from last in Fifth Avenue, and now found spending the summer with her family in a log cabin of one room, with eight hundred Indians for her only neighbors,—and the arrival of her husband from his afternoon’s fishing with two bushels of fine trout packed over his horse’s back,—here only was adequate soothing and consolation for our chagrin. And we didn’t go into camp that night till after supper,—after supper of fresh biscuits, fried trout, and mountain raspberries!

Let me celebrate these high mountain raspberries before the taste goes from my mouth. They grow freely on the hill-sides, from seven thousand to ten thousand feet up, on bushes from six to eighteen inches high, are small and red, and the only wild fruit of the region worth eating. They are delicate and high-flavored to extreme; their mountain home refines and elevates them into the very concentration and essence of all fruitiness; they not only tickle but intoxicate the palate,—so wild and aromatic, indeed, are they that they need some sugar to tone the flavor down to the despiritualized sense of a cultivated taste. Yet they are not so sour as to require sweetening,—only too high-toned for the stranger stomach; after sharing their native air a few days, we found them best picked and eaten

from the vines. It is one of the motives of family excursion parties into the mountains at this season to lay in a supply of raspberry jam for the year; while the men catch trout, the women pick raspberries, cook and sugar them in the camp-kettle, and go home laden with this rare fruity sweetmeat. Here in the Middle Park we were kept in full supply of the fresh fruit by the Ute squaws, who, going off into the hills in the morning, often two together astride the same pony, and a little papoose strapped on its board over the back of one, would come back at night with cups and pails of the berries to exchange with the whites for their own two great weaknesses, sugar and biscuit. But the bears get the most of the raspberries so far. They are at home with them during all the season, and can pick and eat at leisure.

The Hot Springs of the Middle Park are both a curiosity and a virtue. They are a considerable resort already by Coloradians at this season, and when convenient roads are made over into the Park, there will be a great flow of visitors to them. We found twenty or thirty other visitors here, scattered about in the neighborhood, while parties were coming and going every day. The springs for bathing, and the rivers for fishing, are the two great attractions. On the hill-side, fifty feet above the Grand River, and a dozen rods away, these hot sulphurous waters bubble up at three or four different places within a few feet, and coming together into one stream flow over an abrupt bank, say a dozen feet high, into a little circular pool or basin below.

Thence the waters scatter off into the river. But the pool and the fall unite to make a charming natural bathing-house. You are provided with a hot sitz bath and douche together. The stream that pours over the precipice into the pool is about as large as would flow out of a full water pail turned over, making a stream three to five inches in diameter. The water is so hot that you cannot at first bear your hand in it, being  $110^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit in temperature, and the blow of the falling water and its almost scalding heat send the bather shrieking out on his first trial of them; but with light experiments, first an arm, then a leg, and next a shoulder, he gradually gets accustomed to both heat and fall, and can stand directly under the stream without flinching, and then he has such a bath as he can find nowhere else in the world. The invigorating effects are wonderful; there is no lassitude, no chill from it, as is usually experienced after an ordinary hot bath elsewhere; though the water be  $110^{\circ}$  warm, and the air  $30^{\circ}$  to  $40^{\circ}$  cold, the shock of the fall is such a tonic, and the atmosphere itself is so dry and inspiring, that no reaction, no unfavorable effects are felt, even by feeble persons, in coming from one into the other. The first thing in the morning, the last at night did we renew our trial of this hot douche bath during our brief stay in the neighborhood, and the old grew young and the young joyous and rampant from the experience. Wonderful cures are related as having been effected by these springs; the Indians resort to them a good deal, put their sick horses into them, and are loth to yield control

of them to the whites; and in view of their probable future value, there has been a struggle among the latter for their ownership. They are now in the hands of Mr. Byers of the Rocky Mountain News at Denver, under a title that will probably defy all disputants. The waters look and taste precisely like those of the Sharon Sulphur Springs in New York. The difference is that these are hot, those cold. They have deposited sulphur, iron and soda in quantity all about their path, and these are their probable chief ingredients.

Over a little hill from the springs, by the side of the Grand River,—the hill, the stream, and a half mile between us and the Indian encampment,—we settled down in camp for two days and a half, studying Indian life, catching and eating trout, taking hot douche baths in the springs, and making excursions over the neighboring hills into side valleys. The river before us offered good fishing, but better was to be found in Williams Fork, a smaller stream a few miles below, where a half day's sport brought back from forty to sixty pounds of as fine speckled trout as ever came from brooks or lakes of New England. They ranged from a quarter of a pound up to two pounds weight each, and we had them at every meal.

The Indians were very neighborly; hill, stream and distance were no impediment to their attentions; their ponies would gallop with them over all in five minutes; and from two to a dozen, men and boys, never the squaws, were hanging about our camp fires from early morning till late evening.



Curiosity, begging and good-fellowship were their only apparent motives; they did no mischief; they stole nothing, though food and clothing, pistols and knives, things they coveted and needed above all else, were loosely scattered about within reach; they only became a nuisance by being everlastingly in the way and spoiling the enjoyment of one's food by their wistful observation. Mrs. Browning says, you remember, that observation, which is not sympathy, is simply torture. And not a bit of sympathy did they show in our eating except as they shared. We were as liberal as our limited stores would allow; but the capacity of a single Indian's stomach is boundless; what could we do for the hundreds?

These Utes are a good deal higher grade of Indian than I had supposed. They are above the average of our Indian tribes in comeliness and intelligence; and none perhaps are better behaved or more amenable to direction from the whites. There are seven different bands or tribes of them, who occupy the mountains and parks of Colorado and adjoining sections of New Mexico and Utah. The bands number from five hundred to one thousand each. This one consisted of about seventy-five "lodges" or families, each represented by a tent of cloth stretched over a bunch of poles gathered at the top, and spreading around in a small circle. The poles leave a hole in the top for the smoke of a fire in the center beneath, and around which the family squat on their blankets and pile their stores of food and skins and clothing. Probably there

were six hundred in the camp near us, men, women and children. They look frailer and feeble than you would expect; I did not see a single Indian who was six feet high or would weigh over one hundred and seventy-five pounds; they are all, indeed, under size, and no match in nervous or physical force for the average white man. Some of both sexes are of very comely appearance, with fine hands and delicate feet, and shapely limbs, with a bright mulatto complexion, and clear, piercing eyes; but their square heads, coarse hair, hideous daubs of yellow and red paint on the cheek and forehead, and motley raiment,—here a white man's cast-off hat, coat or pantaloons, if squaw a shabby old gown of calico or shirt of white cloth, alternate with Indian leggins and moccasins, bare legs and feet, a dirty white or flaming red blanket, beaded jacket of leather, feathers, and brass or tin trinkets hanging on the head, from the ears, down the back or breast,—all these disorderly and unaccustomed combinations give them at first a repulsive and finally a very absurd appearance. The squaws seem to be kept in the background, and, except when brides or the wives of a chief, dress much more plainly and shabbily than the bucks. They are all more modest and deferential in appearance and manners than would be expected; and I saw no evidence of or taste for strong drink among this tribe,—none of them ever asked for it, while their desire for food, especially for sugar and biscuit, was always manifest. The sugar they gobble up without qualification, and such unnatural food as this and fine flour

breed diseases and weaknesses that are already destroying the race. Coughs are frequent, and dyspepsia; sickness and deaths are quite common among the children; and this incongruous mixture of white man's food and raiment and life with their own, which their contact with civilization has led them into, is sapping their vitality at its fountains. To make matters the worse, they have got hold of our quack medicines, and are great customers for Brandreth and other pills, with the vain hope of curing their maladies. In short, they are simple, savage children, and in that definition we find suggested the only proper way for the government to treat them.

Their wealth consists in their horses, which they breed or steal from their enemies of other tribes, and of which this tribe in the Middle Park must have a couple of hundred. They live on the game they can find in the parks and among the mountains, moving from one spot to another, as seasons and years change, the proceeds of the skins of the deer and other animals they kill, roots, nuts and berries, and the gifts of the government and the settlers. It is altogether even a precarious and hard reliance; the game is fast disappearing,—save of trout we have not seen enough in all our travels among the mountains to feed our small party upon, if it had all been caught; and the government agents are not always to be depended upon in making up deficiencies. Our neighbors had lately come over from the North Park, where they had hunted antelope to some purpose and with

rare fortune, killing four thousand in all in two or three weeks, half of them in a single grand hunt. They cut the meat into thin slices and dry it, so that it looks like strips of old leather; and as we went about their camp we saw the little, weakly children pulling away at bits of it, apparently with not very satisfactory results. Our tribe was in trouble about a chief; the old one was dead, and there were two or three contestants for the succession; but the wrangle was not half so fierce as would arise over a contested election for mayor of a white man's city.

Affairs always seemed very quiet in the Indian camp in the day-time; the braves played cards, or did a little hunting; the squaws gathered wood, tanned skins, braided lariats, or made fantastic leather garments; the boys chased the ponies; but at night they as invariably appeared to be having a grand pow-wow,—rude music and loud shouting rolled up to our camp a volume of coarse sound that at first seemed frightful, as if the preparatory war-whoop for a grand scalping of their white neighbors, but which we learned to regard as the most innocent of barbaric amusements. Though these Utes are quite peaceful and even long-suffering towards the whites, they bear eternal enmity to the Indian tribes of the Plains, and are always ready to have a fight with them. Each party is strongest on its own territory,—the Arapahoes, Comanches and Cheyennes on the prairies, and the Utes among the hills; and each, while eager to receive the party of the other part at home,

rarely go a-visiting. The Plains Indians are better mounted and better armed; chiefly because, keeping up nearly constant warfare with the whites, they have exacted prompt presents and larger pay from the government. The Utes complain, and with reason, that their friendliness causes them to be neglected and cheated; while their and our enemies thrive on government bounty.

There is now a plan for all the Ute tribes to go together into the south-western corner of Colorado, away from the mines and the whites, and there, upon abundant pastures and fruitful mountains, engage in a pastoral and half agricultural life; to set up stock-raising on a large scale, and such tillage as they can bring themselves to, under the protection and aid of the government. The scheme is a good one; the Indians agree to it; and the bargain has been made by the government agents here,—all that is needed is for the authorities at Washington to furnish the means for carrying it into execution. So far as our observation extends, the greatest trouble with our Indian matters lies at Washington; the chief of the cheating and stupidity gathers there; while the Indian agents here upon the ground are, if not immaculate, certainly more intelligent, sensible, and practical, and truer to the good of the settler and the Indian than their superiors at the seat of government.

## VI.

### FROM MIDDLE PARK BY BOULDER PASS.

The Longing Linger in Middle Park—Professor Powell and his Explorations—The Canyon of the Colorado—Over the Boulder Pass in a Snow Storm—A Cold Night and a Warm Noon Camp—Night in a Barn—By Boulder and Central to Mill City and Georgetown.

MILL CITY, Colorado, August, 1868.

WE were loth to leave the Middle Park. I counted the hot douche sulphur baths, and tried to multiply them by six, then by two; but it was of no use,—the Vice-President travels by timetable; and the ladies were in Denver, and the grand expedition to South Park was ahead. I looked longingly through the hills up the valley of the Grand; beyond I knew there lay a wilder country than we had seen, and under the shadow of Long's Peak, Grand Lake itself, a large and fine sheet of water, alive with trout, and rich in commanding beauty. We galloped over the bare hills the other way, and looked off down the valley. Bits of rare stone, agates and jaspers and crystals and petrifications, lay everywhere about; and over the river, a dozen miles off, was the famous "moss agate patch," where these peculiar crystallizations covered the ground; Williams Fork came rollick-

ing down the opposite hill-sides through a line of trees, with innumerable breakfasts of uncaught trout, and a wide green meadow at the mouth for camping ground; while far on in the landscape, the Grand found magnificent pathway for twenty-five miles through a broad field of heavy grass,—the gem, the kernel of the Middle Park; then turning abruptly west, it shot through the mountains by a canyon, lapped up the Blue on the other side, and, thus strengthened, poured out southward for the Colorado and the Pacific Ocean. It was this way we should have gone out,—down the Grand and up the Blue, all within the capacious boundaries of the Middle Park,—but time and the provision bag forbade. Yet there was nothing inviting in the return by the Berthoud Pass; there could be nothing worse than its mire and its rough ascent; another way would at least be new,—and we voted to go out by its rival for a railroad track, the Boulder Pass. The Governor (Hunt) and the Indian agent, finding their talk with the Indians not eloquent enough to convince by lack of food and blankets, had gone back by the old route, taking a dozen or twenty of the leading braves with them, to seek arguments where the freight was not so expensive. The Indian sees the point of an idea always through a full stomach and a warm back, and it required a whole beef and several barrels of flour and sugar and a dozen blankets to prove to them that a petty technical amendment by the Senate to their last treaty was just right.

We had made familiar and friendly acquaintance

with Professor Powell's scientific exploring party, from Illinois, while in the Middle Park. They were in camp there for some time, and made it the end of their summer and the beginning of their winter campaign. The party comprises a dozen or more enthusiastic young men, interested in one department or other of natural science, or eager for border experiences, mostly from Illinois, and giving their time and labor to the expedition for the sake of the education and the health. Professor Powell, the originator and head, does more; the government furnishes food, allowing it to be drawn from the supplies of the nearest post, and the Illinois University and Natural History Society contribute small sums of money; but he draws upon his private purse for all deficiencies, and these must be many thousands of dollars before he gets through. The summer has been spent among the higher Mountains and in the Parks, taking careful notes with barometer and thermometer, collecting flowers and birds and larger animals, and studying the rare geological phenomena of the country. Their collection of birds is very full and valuable, and numbers over two hundred different specimens.

Professor Powell, two or three of his assistants, and Mr. Byers, of the Denver News, who knows all these mountains better than any other man, probably, have just accomplished the ascent of Long's Peak. This is the prominent north-eastern mountain of the Coloradian series, is seen from the Railroad, and is fourteen thousand feet high, and has heretofore defied all the efforts of explorers and



mountaineers to reach its top. They had a terribly hard climb of it, but felt amply paid in the glory of the fact, and more in the glory of the landscape spread before them at the summit. The plains and mountains to the north beyond the Railroad, the unending eastern plains, with Denver and the intervening settlements below and to the south, the whole of Middle Park, and the surrounding and far-beyond mountains,—all Colorado, as it were, and part of Wyoming, lay beneath their eyes. Streams flowed out from the mountain in all directions, and no fewer than thirty-nine lakes on that and the neighboring mountain sides, nearly all of and above the altitude of ten thousand feet, were visible from their commanding height.

From here the explorers will follow down the Grand River, out of the Park into western Colorado, and then strike across to the other and larger branch of the great Colorado River, the Green, and upon that or some of its branches, near the line of Utah, spend the winter in camp, studying up their past achievements, and preparing for the next summer's campaign. The great and final object of the expedition is to explore the upper Colorado River and solve the mysteries of its three hundred mile canyon. They will probably undertake this next season by boats and rafts from their winter camp on the Green; but they may postpone the adventure till another year, and meantime discover and reveal the mountains and plains of western Colorado and eastern Utah, which are so little known. But the mocking ignorance and fascinating reports

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of the course and country of the Colorado ought to hasten them to this interesting field. The maps from Washington, that put down only what is absolutely, scientifically known, leave a great blank space here of three hundred to five hundred miles long and one hundred to two hundred miles broad. Is any other nation so ignorant of itself? All that we do know goes to show that, beginning with the union of the Grand and the Green Rivers, the Colorado is confined for three hundred miles within perpendicular walls of rock averaging three thousand feet high, up which no one can climb, down which no one can safely go, and between which in the river, rapids and falls and furious eddies render passage frightful, certainly dangerous, possibly impossible.

The general conviction of the border population is that whoever dares venture into this canyon will never come out alive. But we have an authentic account this season of a man who made the trip last year and lives to tell the tale. He and a companion, prospecting for gold in south-western Colorado, and driven by Indians, took to the Grand River just before its union with the Green, made a raft and committed themselves to the waters. Foaming rapids and a whirlpool swept the companion and all the provisions off, and they were lost, while White, the surviving hero's name, without food, passed seven days more, a second seven days, upon these strange waters, between frowning walls, over dangerous rapids, through delaying eddies, before he reached Callville in Arizona, the

first settlement and the head of navigation on the river. His entire journey upon the river must have exceeded five hundred miles, and he represents that for most of the distance it was through these traditional high walls, impassable as a fortress, a dungeon over a cataract.

Nearly all of the rivers of Colorado and Utah run for brief distances, from one to twenty-five miles, through these gorges of rock; or they "canyon," as, by making a verb out of the Spanish noun, the people of the country describe the streams as performing the feat of such rock passages, where their banks are inapproachable, and trails or roads are sent over or around; but this rock-guarded career of the great river of the interior basin of the Continent is the grand canyon of the world, and one of its most wonderful marvels. Its passage in well protected boats by careful navigators can scarcely be deemed impracticable, however dangerous, and the country will await the Powell movement through it with eager interest.

The whole field of observation and inquiry which Professor Powell has undertaken is more interesting and important than any which lies before our men of science. The wonder is they have neglected it so long. Here are seen the central forces that formed the Continent; here more striking studies in physical geography, geology, and natural history, than are proffered anywhere else. New knowledge and wide honors await those who catalogue and define them. I can but think the inquiry, vast and important as it is, is fortunate in its

inquirer. Professor Powell is well educated, an enthusiast, resolute, a gallant leader, as his other title of Major and an absent arm, won and lost in the war, testify,—seemingly well-endowed physically and mentally for the arduous work of both body and brains that he has undertaken. He is every way the soul, as he is the purse of the expedition; he leads the way in all danger and difficulty, and his wife, a true helpmeet, and the only woman with the party, is the first to follow.

But while talking with the Professor, our reduced party has chosen a new leader,—General R. F. Lord of Georgetown,—and is packed, bridled and saddled for the start. We cross the river, look gratefully and regretfully for the last time on the Hot Springs, pass through the Indian encampment, and go lingering back over the long hill that we had galloped down so gladly three days before. Two-thirds the day's ride was the same we had passed over in coming in; then we turned to the left, the Boulder Mountain lying on the opposite side of the lower end of the Park from Berthoud; and soon we passed into a succession of woods and open meadows, alternating with picturesque effects, as we gradually ascended the mountain, and offering fine views of sections of the Park from occasional bluffs. The grass was thicker and greener than in the more exposed parts of the Park; the pines and firs and cotton-wood were in full variety and beauty; and the flowers grew gayer,—altogether it was a pleasanter country to ride leisurely through than we had yet met with.

At the end of some twenty-five miles, we camped for the night, in the edge of the woods, fronting an open area of water-courses, grass and willows, with plenty of evidence that the beavers had a settlement there. An old bower of evergreens was cleared up and strengthened to lay our blankets under; and big fires kept off the cold of a ten thousand feet elevation, until three to four o'clock in the morning, when, by their subsidence and the increasing chill, everybody was in a shiver, and glad enough that an early call to morning duty soon summoned us up and astir. The water was freezing, and the grass and shrubs were stiff with frost, so stiff and yet so dry from lack of moisture in the air, that neither then, nor after the sun had softened them, was there wet to be won by walking among them. It was a perfectly dry freeze, and this is why these summer frosts do no more harm to vegetation, and delicate flowers thaw out and go on in their sweet short life in these high mountains.

The clouds gathered, and the rain-drops fell, as we finished breakfast and packed and saddled for the cold hard ride over the mountains. In an hour we were out of the timber, and a dreary waste of rock, relieved only by a thin grass at first, then by mosses, and always by flowers, lay before and all around us. The storm grew thick and fast, hail and snow; the trail wasted itself in the open area; the ground was being rapidly covered with the white snow; straggling was forbidden, and "close up" and "push on" were the orders from the front. The promised view of park and plains, of range on

on range, was lost; only thick, dark clouds, hanging over impenetrable abysses, were around and below us; the storm bit like wasps; beards gathered snow and ice; the mules and horses winced under the blasts,—it was a forlorn looking company for a pleasure party.

But there was exhilaration in the unseasonable struggle; there was something jolly in the idea of thus confounding the almanacs, and finding February in August. At the summit of the Pass,—thirteen thousand feet high,—the storm abated its intensity to let us dismount and pick out of the snow the little yellow flowers that crept up among the rocks everywhere. Then it rolled over again, and now with thunder and lightning, pealing and flashing close around us. Here our laggard pack mules with their drivers came hurrying up and forward; Charley Utter saying as he spurred them by that perhaps we might like it, but for him "hell was pleasanter and safer than a thunder-storm on the range."

• But as we descended the elements calmed; the clouds opened visions of the new valleys, and flashes of sunlight unveiled the great mysteries of the upper mountains. Summer was again around us; and though it was hardly noon, the spot we had reached was so rarely charming, and the sun so refreshing, that we halted, loosed our animals, made our coffee, lunched, and basked on the rocks in the sunshine for a long, delightful hour. We were on a narrow crest of the mountain, shooting out into the valley, and not over twenty feet wide. On either side,

there was a sharp almost perpendicular descent for at least one thousand feet in one case, and seven hundred and fifty in the other. At the foot on our right were two lovely lakes, one almost an absolute circle, rock and grass bound, fed by great snow-banks between us and them, and feeding in turn the South Boulder Creek. On our left, a grassy slope, so steep that it was impossible to walk down except in long zigzags, and far away at the bottom among the trees ran the North Boulder from out the mountains. Everywhere about us, where the snow and the rocks left space, were the greenest of grass, the bluest of harebells, the reddest of painter's brush, the yellowest of sunflowers and buttercups. All, with brightest of sun and bluest of sky, made up such a contrast to our morning ride that we were all in raptures with the various beauties of the scene, and feel still that no spot in all our travel is more sacred to beauty than this of our noon camp on Boulder.

But, as if to frame and fasten the picture still more strongly, we were hardly in the saddle again, before the storm set in anew, and we rode all the afternoon under snow or rain. There is what is called a road over into Middle Park by this Pass, and strong wagons with oxen or mules make the passage; but the difficulties they encounter are frightful,—mud and rocks, rivers and ravines,—it is hard to imagine how any wheels can surmount them and remain whole,—and few do. Our trail followed the road only in part; it made short cuts over hills, through woods, and across valleys, and

was full of variety, annoyance, sometimes of difficulty; but we found all less vexatious than the descent of Berthoud Pass, and, following the South Boulder Creek, came at last, wet and weary, into the nearly deserted mining village of South Boulder. Here we found welcome around the fire of the post-office; a deserted cabin was thrown open to us for our baggage and our meals; and a big barn's loft with fresh hay furnished a magnificent bedroom. We dined, we ate, having fresh meat, cream and vegetables added to our bill of fare, and we slept, all in luxury. Half the village was pre-occupied by a large party of men and women, some twenty to thirty, from the villages farther down the valley, on their way into the Park by the road we had come out. They had ox teams for their baggage, saddle animals to carry themselves, and a cow to furnish fresh milk; and thus generously equipped were jollily entering upon camp life among the mountains for ten days or a fortnight.

An early start the next morning, and a rapid gallop of ten miles over good roads, across the hills, by scattered saw-mills, farm-houses, and mining-camps, brought us into the valley of North Clear Creek, and to the higgledy-piggledy but brisk town of Central City in season for the morning stage to Denver. Our old friends here gave us hearty welcome, but stared at our costumes in grim dismay, and some took us for "honest miners" come to town from the mountains for fresh supplies. Here, too, the party separated; the Vice-President going on to Denver with some of the others; but the Governor (Bross)



and myself and our Georgetown friends, first eating a French dinner by way of contrast to camp diet and manners, rode on over another range of hills into the South Clear Creek valley. And here, again, a bath at the Idaho warm springs, and a couple of days' rest and recreation at Mill City and Georgetown have prepared us for another and still more select expedition into the highest mountain tops of the country.

## VII.

### OVER GRAY'S PEAK TO SOUTH PARK.

A Private Outfit for a Grand Mountain Excursion—Gray's Peaks and What They Showed Us—The Finest Mountain View in the World—Saturday Night Camp in the Snake River Valley—Sunday Travel with Commodore Decatur—A Butter Ranch—How Life Goes in Camp, and What it Costs—The Blue River Valley—Breckenridge, and over the Range into South Park through Thunder and Lightning, Hail and Rain.

SOUTH PARK, Colorado, August, 1868.

WHILE the Vice-President, Governor Hunt, and a considerable party of Denver friends were to accompany our ladies into the South Park by the usual wagon road from that point, Governor Bross, General Lord and myself made a short cut but rougher journey over two high ranges of mountains, much of the way impassable to vehicles, and met them here. Our chief object was to ascend Gray's Peaks, the highest summits yet accurately measured in the Colorado mountains, and from their central position commanding the widest and most majestic views to be obtained in the country. Such a load as we put on our single pack mule: a great overtopping cube of blankets and sacks of meat and bread, and four little feet sticking out

beneath, were all that could be seen as it went shaking along on a mysterious trot. Sending the outfit and our outfitter, Ashley Franklin, by an easier path over to where we intended to camp for the night, we three started early Saturday morning from Georgetown,—distance fifteen miles to Gray's Peaks, and, by virtue of mines among the mountains, a good wagon road two-thirds the way. It was an object to get to the summit as early as possible, before afternoon haze or cloud should dim the view, and we galloped rapidly through aspen groves, then among larger pines, by the side of rapidly descending streams, around and around, up and up, and finally out above the trees, where grass and flowers had all life to themselves, and again above these and only thin mosses lived among the stones, and yet still higher, where the mountains became great walls of rock, or immense mounds of broken stone, as if they had been run through a crusher for the benefit of Mr. Macadam. Such was the character of Gray's Peaks. Great patches of snow divided place with the rocks, and fed the clear, cold rivulets that started out from every sheltered nook or side of the mountains; but they only added to the cold dreariness of the scene. The only life was grasshoppers,—here they were still by thousands, by millions, sporting in the air and frisking over the snow, but the latter's chill seemed soon to overcome their life, for they lay dead in countless numbers upon its white surface. In some places the dead grasshoppers could have been shoveled up by the bushels, and down at

the edges of the snow cold grasshopper soup was to be had *ad libitum*. There was a feast here for the bears, but we could see none enjoying it.

Gray's Peaks,—great mounds or monuments of loose, broken stone,—shoot up sharply from a single base, in the midst of very high mountains all about. Their sharpness increases the appearance of the fact of their superior height. Below, the two seem but a rifle shot apart; above, they are manifestly several miles away from each other; but their common paternity, their similarity in form, effect and views, entitle them to bear the common name. It was probably given originally to the lower peak alone by Dr. C. C. Parry of St. Louis, who has been, so far, the most thorough scientific explorer of the higher mountain regions of Colorado, and in honor of the distinguished Cambridge botanist, Professor Gray; but though there are persistent rivals for the name of the other and higher peak,—Dr. Parry himself, we believe, has suggested that of Professor Torrey for it,—the local judgment insists that they shall go together with the name of Gray. There are now trails for horses to the top of each,—that to the higher was nearly finished while we were there; and though the path to the lower is the more easy and familiar, our ambition was not content with anything less than the highest, and spite of fatigue and cold we struck out for it. Going through a snow-drift at least fifteen feet high, and coming out above all snow deposits, we fastened our animals with stones at the end of the path, and slowly toiled the remaining quarter

of a mile over the loose rocks,—the thin air obliging us to stop every three minutes to gain our breath,—and at high noon sat upon the highest peak of the highest known mountain of the great Rocky Mountain range. Dr. Parry made the lower peak fourteen thousand two hundred and fifty-one feet high; the highest must be at least fourteen thousand five hundred.

The scene before us was ample recompense for double the toil. It was the great sight in all our Colorado travel. In impressiveness,—in overcomingness, it takes rank with the three or four great natural wonders of the world,—with Niagara Falls from the Tower, with the Yosemite Valley from Inspiration Point. No Swiss mountain view carries such majestic sweep of distance, such sublime combination of height and breadth and depth; such uplifting into the presence of God; such dwarfing of the mortal sense, such welcome to the immortal thought. It was not beauty, it was sublimity; it was not power, nor order, nor color, it was majesty; it was not a part, it was the whole; it was not man but God, that was about, before, in us. Mountains and mountains everywhere,—even the great Parks, even the unending Plains seemed but patches among the white ranges of hills stretching above and beyond one another. We looked into Middle Park below us on the north; over a single line of mountains into South Park, below us on the south,—but beyond both were the unending peaks, the everlasting hills. To the west, the broadest, noblest ranges of mountains,—there seemed no breaks among them

except such as served to mark the end of one and the beginning of another, and no possible limit to their extension. The snow whitened all, covered many, and brought out their lines in conspicuous majesty. Over one of the largest and finest, the snow-fields lay in the form of an immense cross, and by this it is known in all the mountain views of the territory. It is as if God has set His sign, His seal, His promise there,—a beacon upon the very center and height of the Continent to all its people and all its generations. Beyond this uplifted what seemed to be the only mountain in all the range of view higher than the peak upon which we stood. It is named Sopris Peak upon some of the maps, but has never been explored, and is more completely covered with snow than any other.

Turning to the east we find relief in the softer and yet majestic and unending vision of the Plains,—on, on they stretch in everlasting green and gray until lost in the dim haze that is just beginning to rise along the horizon. Directly below us, great rough seams in the mountain sides, as if fire and water had been at work for ages to waste and overturn; dreary areas of red and brown and gray rocks; masses of timber; bits of green in the far-down valley; flashes of darkness where little lakes nestled amid the rocks, fed by snow, and feeding the streams,—Nature everywhere in her original forms, and her abounding waste of wealth, as if here was the great supply store and workshop of Creation, the fountain of Earth. Looking from side to side, above, below, and around,—impressed,

oppressed everywhere with the presence of the Beginning ; it was almost unconsciously and instinctively that we turned again and at last, as Mrs. Browning makes Romney Leigh, "toward the east:"—

"———where faint and fair,  
 Along the tingling desert of the sky,  
 Beyond the circle of the conscious hills,  
 Were laid in jasper-stone as clear as glass  
 The first foundations of that new, near Day,  
 Which should be builded out of heaven, to God."

It was difficult to leave this citadel of earth, this outpost of heaven ; but our time and our strength were both exhausted. The long gallop, the hard climb, more, the excitement of the vision of earth and sky at this elevation of over fourteen thousand feet above the ocean level had used up our nerve-power ; the cool breezes, too, chilled us ; and after lunching, we regained our horses, and pushed down the other side of the mountain from that we came up.

There was only a dim trail to follow, running hither and thither around and among the hills, and then across and along the valleys of the streams that came in from every mountain crevice and snow-bank. We crossed Colfax Park, a little gem of grass and flowers, with Colfax Lake at its head, a great rock bowl of clear water, high in the hill-side, and pouring its surplus over a sharp natural wall of stone,—so named by an enthusiastic and appreciative miner in the lower valley, who would hardly be reconciled with us that we had not brought the Vice-President to witness how happily and fitly he had been honored here. We passed also through

many a beaver village; but the inhabitants gave us no visible welcome; they modestly let their works speak for them. The woods grew thick and mellow; the aspen tender, the spruces silver-hung and silver-tongued; and we came at last,—a long ten miles from the summit of Gray's Peak,—to our proposed camping spot, the junction of two forks of the Snake River and of the two trails from Georgetown.

Here, the grass was abundant, the stream ran pure and strong, unpolluted by miner's mud, fuel was plenty, even the mosquitoes sang a welcome, but no Ashley Franklin, no pack-mule was to be seen, no blankets, no food, no nothing, that belonged to us, but weariness and hunger. We sounded the war-whoop of the country,—a shrill, far-reaching cry; and back the voices came, not only from our lagging outfit, but from miners here and there among the hills, just finishing their day's work, and wondering who had come into their wilderness now. The mules took up the refrain, and bellowed from "depths that overflow" their welcome to each other. Soon we were at home, the coffee brewing, the ham stewing, and a hole through the peach can; Commodore Decatur, the prince of prospectors, the character of all Colorado characters, dropped in to bid us welcome to his principality, on his way from mine to cabin; under the frosts of night and the smoke of the camp fire, the merry mosquitoes flew away; our tent was raised, our blankets spread; and the peace of Saturday night and a day richly spent reigned over us four and no more.



But camp life is not all comfort. This very blessed Saturday night on the Snake River, the wind took turns in coming out of the three or four valleys that converged upon our camping-ground, and blew the virulent smoke in upon us. Shift the fire, change the blanket, still the smoke followed us, as if charmed, and was discomfort and sleeplessness to all, poison to at least one. There was a yearning for something delicate for the Sunday morning breakfast,—a bit of cream toast, or a soft egg, and some milk-ameliorated coffee; but the knurly little "Jack," that carried our "bed and board," had no provision for sensitive stomachs, and we had to take our victual and drink "straight,"—plain ham and bread and butter and black coffee,—or go without. But that best and cheapest of doctors and nurses, the sun came to our relief; and later in the day a pitcher of butter-milk completed and capped his healing triumphs. Mr. Richardson records my sarcastic contempt for buttermilk three years ago, but I take it all back now,—no cup of it shall ever pass from my lips again other than empty. It comes to a faint and forlorn stomach like woman's sympathy to a bruised heart.

Governor Bross galloped back into the hills to make a call at a solitary cabin half a dozen miles away; Commodore Decatur dropped in with the Lord's blessing on his lips, and picked me up for a ride down the river,—whither we were bound;—General Lord followed along with his fishing-pole, lingering over the streams; and the mule and his master strolled more leisurely after, to protect the

rear and gather in the Governor. There was a rough wagon road most of the way, chiefly through woods, occasionally across an open park, frequently over or in the stream, but the hills kept close guard, and the eye was not allowed to wander far away for beauty. But the "Commodore," who, to thirty years of schools and civilization, has added twenty of border life in Mexico, in Nebraska and in Colorado, living at times among the Indians, and for many a season in his solitary cabin in these elevated valleys, kept me entertained with his original experiences, his keen observations on men and manners, and his quaint yet rich philosophies. He is an old Greek philosopher,—with an American variation; as wise as Socrates, as enthusiastic as a child, as mysterious in life and purpose as William H. Seward or an Egyptian sphynx, as religious as a Methodist class-leader,—he ranks high among the individual institutions and idiosyncracies of Colorado, such as Governor Hunt, Editor Goldrick and Charley Utter, whom not to know is to miss the next piquant things to its Mountains and Parks.

We sauntered thus through ten miles in four hours, gathering up at last the stragglers in the rear, and came out then into a grand opening in the valley. The timber disappeared; the hills sharpened into a dead wall on one side, and swept away in soft rolling outlines on the other; a wide stretch of intervale lay between, while pretty groves of trees tempered the distant knolls and broke the abruptness of forests beyond. We were again, indeed, in Middle Park, though a high range of

mountains and a long, hard ride separated us from that part of it which we visited the week before.

Away under a bluff, a speck in the distance, was a log-cabin,—“the Georgia Ranch,” towards which we now rode with freshened speed. Here in a cabin of two rooms, with a log milk-house outside, the only dwellers in this rich pasture park, were a man, his wife and daughter; their home and farm were in Southern Colorado, but they had come up here in the spring with forty or fifty cows, and were making one hundred and forty-five pounds of butter a week, and selling it to the miners in the cabins and camps among the hills ten to fifteen miles around, for seventy-five cents a pound; when the snows begin to fall in October, they will drive the herd back to their southern pastures,—the increase of the cows will pay all expenses, and the one hundred dollars a week or more cash for butter and milk, is clear profit. The dairy cabin was a “sight to behold,” such piles of fresh golden butter, such shelves of full pans of milk,—there wasn’t room for another pound or pan; and yet the demand far exceeds the supply,—it was a favor to be allowed to purchase the treasures of “Georgia Ranch.” It was our “Commodore’s” Sunday diversion to ride down these dozen miles, fill his weekly butter-pail and his milk-can, and gallop back in season for a Sunday night supper with his cabin comrade of “mush and milk.”

These mining hermits in the mountains manage to live well,—they become adepts in cooking; with flour and meal and fresh meat, potatoes and onions,

dried and canned fruits, the bill of fare is appetizing ; and the cost of the "best tables" is from seventy-five cents to one dollar a day. Nor are they always thus exiles from society ; their season in the hills, hunting new lodes or developing old ones, is confined to the summer ; when cold and snow come, they flee to the villages or to Denver,—to live as leisurely and luxuriously as what they have made the past season or hope to make the next will permit.

We "packed" a bottle of cream, filled our water canteen with milk, took Decatur's Methodistic benediction,—“May the Lord take a liking to you,”—with a hearty “amen,” and rode down the valley, by numerous soda and other mineral springs, three or four miles farther, to our camp for the night. This was at a still more picturesque spot,—a trinity of rivers, a triangle of mountains. The Blue and the Snake Rivers and Ten Mile Creek all meet and mingle here within a few rods ; each a strong, hearty stream, from its own independent circle of mountains ; and while the waters unresisting swam together, the hills stood apart and away, frowning in dark forests and black rock, and cold with great snow-fields, overlooking the scene, which green meadows, and blue sky, and warm sun mellowed and brightened. A neck of land, holding abundant grass and fuel, between the three rivers at the point of junction, offered a magnificent camping-ground. It is a spot to settle down upon and keep house at for a week. Ten Mile Creek overflows with trout ; General Lord took ten pounds out of a single hole in a less number of minutes,—a single fish

weighing about three pounds; and deer and game birds must be readily findable in the neighborhood. The Blue isn't blue,—its waters have been troubled by the miners, and it gives its name and mud color to the combined stream, which flows off through an open, inviting valley to join the Grand, and thence to make up the grand Colorado of the West.

We had a lesson in precaution, after unloading, and proceeding to make camp here, by finding that nobody had any matches; we could not shoot flame out of our metallic-cartridge pistols; nor had we the Indian accomplishment of rubbing fire out of two sticks; so the best mule was put over the road to the "Ranch" and back at a very un-mule-like-gait, to bring us the means of kindling our camp fire. But we had a sumptuous supper, of cream toast and trout, with milk for our coffee, and a sweet night in camp, though lulled to sleep by the roll of thunder and the patter of a brisk shower, with high wind and sharp lightning; and we turned reluctantly up the valley of the Blue, the next morning, with the resolution to come to stay at this point another season.

We had come this way through a little obstinacy of our own, instead of taking the common and short cut over the hills, from the valley of the upper Snake to Breckenridge,—sure that the conjunction of the Blue, the Snake and Ten Mile must offer something worth seeing in the way of valley and mountain scenery; and so we were quite proud of our generous repayment, and desire all future travelers to make a note of our route, and follow it. The valley of the Blue, both above and below where we

struck it, is altogether one of the most interesting scenic sections of the territory; it should be taken in going into or out from the Hot Springs; there is no route so rich in interest and beauty as that through it from the Middle to the South Park, or vice versa, or from Georgetown over Gray's Peaks into either Park,—and we were sorry not to have time for wider exploration of its lines.

Our day's ride now followed up the river to its very head in the mountains. The first eight miles was through a fine open grazing country, and we found a magnificent herd of fat cattle, strongly marked with Durham blood, enjoying its rich grasses. They had been sent up here to fatten for the summer from some of the ranches of the lower valleys, and, perhaps, to furnish fresh beef to the mining camps, which are quite numerous among the side valleys of the neighborhood. Nearly all our day's ride we were in sight of the ditches that had been built to carry water to the rich beds of sand that were in course of being washed over for gold deposits at various localities in the valleys. One of these ditches is twelve miles long; tapping the Blue away up in the mountains, it takes a vigorous stream along and around the mountain sides, up and down, from gulch to gulch, parting with portions at different points on the route to little companies of miners at so much per foot; and, deployed into sand-banks, swept through long boxes, tarried in screens and by petty dams, it does its work of separating the tiny particles of gold from the earth, and finds its way back to the parent stream,

miles from where it left it, but bringing the pollutions of the world and of labor with it. Many thousands of dollars are invested in these ditches; sometimes they are made and owned by individuals, who also work the mines or deposits of gold to which they lead, but oftener now they belong to companies that have no other interest than to sell water from them to those who mine alone. Generally they have passed out of the hands of their builders, who rarely realized anything but expectations, vast and vain, from them.

At Breckenridge we got above the washings, and the river was clear again. This is the center of these upper mining interests, but a village of only twenty or thirty cabins, located ten thousand feet high, and scarcely habitable in winter, though many of the miners do hibernate here through the season of snow and cold that begins in early October and ends in June. There is a good hotel here, of logs to be sure, with a broad buxom matron, and black-eyed beauties of daughters, to whom, after dinner, we consigned Governor Bross, with warning against his fascinations, while General Lord and myself, with our guide, went on over the range into the South Park. The miners were to be gathered in the next night for speeches from the Vice-President and the Governor, and the latter awaited the occasion and the former's arrival.

There was a good wagon road all our way, leading from Breckenridge to the summit of Breckenridge Pass, through open woods, flower-endowed meadows, a broken, various and interesting moun-

tain country, often giving majestic views of the higher and snow-crowned peaks, with glimpses of valleys and parks below and beyond. The Pass is just above the timber line, about twelve thousand feet high, and as we mounted it, a cold storm gathered upon the snow-fields above us, wheeled from peak to peak in densely black clouds, and soon broke in gusts of wind, in vivid lightning, in startlingly close and loud claps of thunder, in driving snow, in pelting hail, in drizzling rain. We were below the storm's fountain, but near enough to see all its grand movements, to feel its awful presence, to be shaken with fear, to gather inspiration. The rapidity of its passage from side to side, from peak to peak, was wonderful; the crashing loudness of its thunderous discharges awful; one moment we felt like "fleeing before the Lord," the next charmed and awed into rest in His presence.

But it was dreary enough, when the thundering and the flashing ceased, and the clouds stopped their majestic movement, and hung in deep mists over all the mountains and the valleys, and the rain poured ceaselessly down. The poetry was gone, and gathering overcoats and rubber closely about us, we bent our heads to the undeviating shower, and pushed gloomily and ghastily on. It seemed a long ride down mountain side and through valley to Hamilton,—woods that made us feel even more pitiful; open valleys that made the rain more pitiless; streams twisted out of place and shape by ruthless miners; desolated cabins, doorless, windowless,—even the storm was more inviting; Tarryall,



where thousands dug and washed sands for gold three and four years ago, and now only two or three cabins, mud-patched and turf-warmed, sent forth the smoke of home; a solitary dirt-washer trudging along from his day's mountain work, with dinner-pail and pickax,—out at last, where, through the opening mists, we could see the long, level reaches of South Park, and into Hamilton,—fifty or more vacant or decaying cabins and two log hotels,—where one thousand men mined in '60 to '64, and gayety and vice reigned, and now a dozen or twenty men and three or four women were the entire population; a grimy, dirty looking village of the past, for all the world in the storm like an old Swiss mountain village, with manure heaps in front of the houses, and a few sorry looking horses and mules scattered about the pastures.

It was a comfortless promise after so comfortless a ride. We passed on by the village to a plateau above the river, and tried to make camp; but everything was wet,—the water especially so and very muddy; we couldn't start a fire; our guide was obstinate for going to the hotel, and after long struggling against it, we capitulated and went. We gained shelter and warmth, and a good supper, and chapters of country experiences around the fire with the tobacco, and a small bed for two; but there are more real comfort and better air and greater cleanliness and real independence in camp than in these pent-up mountain inns. It was hard to accept such compromise with civilization after the luxuries we had enjoyed in our ground and tent homes.

## VIII.

### THE SOUTH PARK AND MOUNT LINCOLN.

Sunshine and Reunion in the South Park—The Beauties of the Park—Camping Experiences—The Ascent of Mount Lincoln, the Mother of the Mother Mountains—A Snow Storm on the Summit—Montgomery and Fairplay—The Everlasting Plattes—Over the Range again into the Arkansas Valley.

UPPER ARKANSAS VALLEY, August, 1868.

WITH the morning at Hamilton came sunshine and beautiful views of the South Park country, that lay spread out before us in unending stretches of green prairie; here lifted up by a perfect embankment to a new level and going on again in another plain; there rolling off into hills with patches of evergreen; now bringing down from the mountains, still through pastures green, tributaries to the main river; offering on every hand glimpses of beckoning repetitions of itself through and over hills; while all around in the distant horizon huge mountains stood sentinel, guarding this great upper garden-spot of the territory, as if jealous lest its frontiers be invaded, its lands despoiled. No so fine a combination of the grand beauty of the plains, of the lovely beauty of the hills, of the majestic beauty of the mountains ever spread itself before

my eyes. Water-courses were abundant, groves and forests were placed with sufficient frequency to diversify the scene and relieve and kindle the eye, while mountains, near and remote, gave their impressive sanction and completeness to the picture. The coloring was brighter yet softer than in Middle Park; and we felt that Colorado had indeed reserved her choicest landscape treasures for us to the last.

Before noon, six miles away, we caught sight of our companions from Denver, coming over the hill, —some on horseback, some in light carriages, and the rest in wagons with the baggage. They looked like one of the patriarchal families of Old Testament times, sons and daughters, servants and asses, moving from one country to another, in obedience to high commandment; and as if representatives of another tribe, we rode out to greet and welcome them to our goodly land. We propitiated their stomachs with our treasured big trout; and after lunch upon the open prairie, the grand caravan moved on, in somewhat disorderly array.

We made a dozen miles, along the northern line of the Park, over a rich, rolling country, starred by occasional lakes, darkened by frequent forests, shadowed by the everlasting snow fields of the mountains. The inevitable afternoon storm came upon us midway, and we rode into Fairplay, the most considerable town of the South Park country, variously wet and considerably disgusted. The ladies stopped by the hospitable fires of the village, while the men went on, and made camp on a hill

overlooking the valley, shaded by a few old and stunted pines, and circled by a miner's ditch full of furiously running water. Here half a dozen fires were kindled, as many tents stretched, and, the storm passing away, everybody came into camp, and sleep followed supper to the satisfaction of all.

We moved but a dozen miles the next day, up into the mountains more closely, and near Montgomery, from whence some of us were to ascend Mount Lincoln the day after. These winding valleys, leading out from the Park proper to the mountains, are very beautiful, and the road between Fairplay and Montgomery, which lies close under the highest mountains, offers a succession of brilliantly picturesque mountain and valley views. The valleys are broad, and fertile with green grass, and bright with flowers, and broken with forest patches, while the mountains rise all about in every attitude, and reach up on every hand to snow-fields, flashing in the morning and reddening in the evening sun.

Our camp was a gay one that night,—it lay scattered along a green hill-side, a few rods from a river, and directly under a forest; fuel was abundant, and the fires burned bright and high in all directions; we were not worn with the day's travel; anticipation of the mountain excursion the next morning, was keen and exhilarating; and song and speech and dance around the central camp fire exhausted the hours till bed-time.

It was a happy thought to call the parent mountain of this region, of the whole Rocky Mountain range proper, for the President who guided the

Nation so proudly through civil war and slavery to peace and freedom. Peer among presidents and mother among mountains is LINCOLN. The higher Gray's Peak is as high, possibly a hundred or two feet higher; but Mount Lincoln is broader, more majestic, more mountainous. Out from its wide-spreading folds stretch three or four lines of snow-covered mountains; within its recesses spring the waters of three great rivers, the Platte, the Arkansas and the Colorado, that fertilize the plains of half the Continent, and bury themselves, at last, two in the Atlantic and the third in the Pacific Ocean. This is the initial point in our geography, and a fountain-head of national wealth and strength. This geographical parentage, the representative association of its name and office, and the enthusiasm kindled by our accounts of the view from Gray's Peak, spread a zest among our party for climbing Mount Lincoln; and though the morning was strewn with showers, and huge black clouds hung over the mountain tops in alternation with great rifts of sunshine, these revealing fresh-fallen fields of snow, we determined to take our chances, and galloped off, a dozen strong; women and men, up the valley to Montgomery.

The rain poured relentlessly through these five miles; but then the sunshine came out, and joined by half a dozen more at that point, we turned directly up the mountain side. For two or three miles there is a rough wagon road; beyond that not even a trail that is fixed. Catching sight of the distant goal, we scattered irregularly over the

intervening slopes and ravines; first through richest grasses and most abundant and high-colored flowers; then across huge snow-fields, so soft under the summer sun, that our animals could not bear us without floundering in dangerous depths, and we had to dismount and walk and lead; next over wide but steep fields of thin mosses, delicate in leaf and blossom to the last degree, pink and white and blue,—the very final condensed expression of nature; all beauty, all tenderness, all sweetness in essence; and at last, beyond all growth, beyond all snow, out upon miles of broken stones, immeasurably deep, as steep as they could lie.

To ascend over these was tough work; the wind blew biting cold; clouds charged with hail and snow every few minutes swept over, through us; the air was so rare that the animals labored for breath at every step; the sides so steep and the stones so loose as to render the footing fickle, even dangerous; we could only make upward progress in slow degree by long, zigzag courses back and forth; and every few minutes the panting, trembling horses and mules would come to a stubborn stop in very fear of their footing. Then we had to dismount and reassure them by leading the way, or find firmer paths. But at last we got as far as horses could go; and a climb of five hundred feet remained for ourselves of even steeper and still loose-lying rocks to the summit. Then we found our hearts and lungs, if never before; work as fast as they could, shaking our very frames in the haste to keep up with their duty, we still had to stop and

rest every thirty or forty feet, and let them get even with the air.

Finally on the very crest of the mammoth mountain, the one spot higher than all others, than all around so far as could be seen. Our hopes our fears belied, our fears our hopes in turn; the sweep of the horizon was broken by thick clouds; and we could not compare the view with its rival, from Gray's Peak; but the contending elements lent a new majesty, almost a terror to the scene. Sunshine and storm were continually at war; clouds and clearness constantly changing places; now it was all light to the east, and Gray's Peak and all the intervening mountains to the Plains, the Plains themselves, Denver itself glowed in golden sunshine, while in the west everything was shrouded in blackness and despair; then the clouds came upon and over us, pelting us with snow, and passing by opened great lines of brightness to the west, and we could see on to indefinable distances of snow-covered mountains,—Sopris Peak, the mountain with the snow cross, a continent of rocks and snow, dreary yet beautiful in color, majestic yet fascinating in form. So we caught long narrow glimpses of the South Park, and the Arkansas valley, south of us; and Pike's Peak in one direction and Long's Peak in another were not denied us,—sentinels of nature in the far off corners of the territory, rising above clouds, over intervening storms; while deep chasms, yawning recesses opened in ghastliness through the clouds below us on every side.

The whole vision, fickle, forbidding in many fea-

tures, always surprising, never satisfying, piqueing us by what was withheld, astonishing us by what was given, though disappointing our hopes, yet was vastly finer than our fears. It was the wildest of mountain views and mountain experiences, such as may be welcomed as a variety, though not chosen as the reward for a single excursion. Similar experiences in the high Alps are tamer every way; there is less variety in the landscape; less color in the mountains and the atmosphere; above all, less sweep of distance, less piling of mountain on mountain, through the long openings in the clouds.

We waited as long as the freezing air and the driving snow would let us for wider views of earth and sky; but clouds and storm growing denser, and having finished our lunch of sandwiches and sardines, pickles and peaches, and, coffee being out of the question, a necessary flask of whisky, we retraced the tedious, hard-going way to the valley. Far up, where only rocks reigned, beautiful white and blue birds, like large doves, but called mountain partridges, trotted or flew tamely about us; and a revolver sadly repaid the faith of some of them. Back among the flowers, we gathered large bouquets of bright painter's brush, harebells, fringed gentians, lupins and quaint grasses, and rode into Montgomery aglow with color and excitement, and wet alike from perspiration, snow and rain.

The whole excursion up from and back to Montgomery occupied five hours. The distance cannot be more than six miles to the top; and the height of the mountain, though never exactly measured,



must exceed fourteen thousand feet above the sea level. The wildest estimates are made by the local population of these higher peaks of Colorado; but unless it be Sopris Peak in the far West, it is not probable that any one of them rises as high as Mount Whitney in the Sierra Nevada of California, which is known to be above fifteen thousand feet. Gray, Lincoln, Pike's and Long's Peaks are the four great mountains of explored Colorado; they are all above fourteen thousand feet high, but probably no one goes higher than fourteen thousand five hundred.

Montgomery, which lies close at the foot of Mount Lincoln, on the inside, and is about ten thousand feet high, is another of the deserted mining towns of Colorado. There are a hundred or two houses standing, but only one now occupied. Several years ago, the mines in the hill-sides were rich and remunerative, and a population of two or three thousand were gathered there. There was an opera house, and saloons and stores by the dozens; but the more readily worked ore gave out, there were no means to reduce profitably what followed in the mines, and fresher discoveries elsewhere invited the people "to move on." "Buckskin Joe" is another similar town, five miles off, under another spur of Mount Lincoln. There are good and rich mines at both places, and new ones are even still being discovered; but like most of the ores of Colorado, they await cheaper labor and simpler and more searching processes of treatment for their profitable use.

The solitary family in Montgomery, cultivated, tasteful people, such as we find everywhere among these mountain recesses, gave us a rich hospitality,—which means a “square meal” and a hearty welcome,—and, sunshine being now permanently the victor, we had a pleasant afternoon ride down the valley, by our now deserted camp of the night before, along the clear-running juices of old Lincoln, winding about among her child-hills, their snow-tops reddening under the descending sun, and giving depth and richness to the verdure of valley and forest. Reaching Fairplay at dusk, we found the rest of the party,—those who did not go up Mount Lincoln,—had gone ten miles farther on, with tents, bag and baggage, and left us to the miserable resource of a night's life in town. But the long-stretching log hotel and the country habit of close-packing,—no house is ever full here, so long as any bed has less than four in it, or there is a vacant corner to lay a blanket,—made accommodations for us all, even though the village was unusually crowded that night by reason of Mr. Colfax and Governor Bross stopping over to make speeches. But we missed the better victual, the wider space, the purer air of camp, and duly anathematized Governor Hunt and his various “little Indians,” for running away from us.

The Platte River divides, subdivides, and redivides almost indefinitely; and when we get up here among its head waters, the brain fairly grows confused with the number of its forks or branches. The same name extends to the remotest subdivi-

sion; and we have the north branch of the south fork of the South Platte; and the middle fork of the north branch of the south fork of the South Platte, and so on *ad infinitum*. I wish the Coloradians would abolish the sinuosities and multiplications, and put the Plattes into numerals, as Platte 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and so on. I verily believe they would run up to the hundreds; but that would be better than the "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" nomenclature. Perhaps, though, they mean to make their geography take the place of classics as a discipline for the youthful mind; if so, they have hit upon a very ingenious substitute, not to say improvement. As between learning the Plattes and conjugating a Greek verb, where's the choice for hardness? All the time we were in the South Park, we were among Plattes, and getting to the heads of Plattes, and each was big enough and independent enough to go alone, and to deserve a name to itself. Fairplay lies on the Platte, and so did every one of our camping grounds for a week.

I believe I have exhausted my adjectives and every known variety of picture frame in trying to set the South Park landscapes in the mind's eye of the reader. But their soft coloring, their rich variety of outline, their long sweep of distance, their greyish-green grasses, their deep-green evergreens, their silvery-green aspens, their summer pictures in their winter frames,—here August, there rising around always January,—only seeing can be feeling and believing. Especially beautiful and exhilarating to sense and spirit are the approaches to

the mountains out from the central basin or prairie. First, over slight and soft-rolling hills, through wide valleys, around spurs of the mountains into new valleys, each succeeding one narrower, finally into canyons or chasms, and then up the abrupt hill-side; flowers that had deserted the plains now beginning, then trees ceasing, and snow-banks appearing; and finally catching the cold western wind as it sweeps over the crest of pass or hill. Occasionally, in the open prairie country, a ranch where some successor of David tends his flocks; in the narrow valleys, or on the hill-sides, the deserted cabins of gold-hunters, who had passed on; every six or eight miles a new Platte to cross; and at each ascended mountain-top the beginning of a new Platte, running through tender grass out of a little round lake, or oozing from under a huge snow-bank.

These were our observations the next day, as we galloped savagely on after the head-quarters of the camp. We surprised it at lunch by our rapidity, and then all pushed on "over the range" that divides South Park from the Arkansas valley. The South Park country is free from rocks or stones; the waste of the mountains is broken and pulverized before it reaches the valleys; and even when we mount above grass and trees and earth, the "rock-ribbed hills" are simply great deposits of small stones, or, more correctly, broken rocks. This is one great element in the softness of its scenery. But as we go over the mountains into the Arkansas valley, there is a change; the

roads become rough with stones; boulders lie along the path or in the hill-sides, and the water-courses have thrust themselves through high walls of solid rock. There is more ruggedness and coarseness in nature; and while the want of it was not felt, now we welcome the new materials in the landscape. Our heavy baggage teams were slow in working up the huge hills and down, and we went into camp at the first passable widening of the side valley.

## IX.

### AN INDIAN SCARE—THE TWIN LAKES.

Alarming Indian Reports—The Savages on our Track—Scenes and Thoughts in Camp—A Nervous Night and its Sufferings—The Indian Question Generally—The Old False, the New True Policy—The Relief of the Next Morning—The Arkansas Valley and its Greetings—The Twin Lakes and their Beauties—Sunday and Short-Cake—Taylor and Trout.

TWIN LAKES, Upper Arkansas Valley, September, 1868.

THE circle of our Colorado and border travel experience has been made complete by an Indian scare. We have shared the horrible excitement of the settlers, when the hostile Indians put on their war-paint, raise their war-whoop, and dash wildly upon the life and property of the whites. Just as we were going into camp,—weary with mountain travel, and our heaviest teams far behind,—this side the range, there dashed in, on a gaunt white horse, a grim messenger from Denver, with official advices to Governor Hunt that the Indians of the Plains,—the Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Sioux,—were on the “war-path;” that from seeming friends they had suddenly turned again to open foes; and were raiding furiously all among the settlements, east, north and south of Denver, stealing horses and

shooting the people. We were besought to keep among the mountains,—the homes of the friendly Utes,—as the only place of safety, for our company of territorial and federal officials would be a tempting prize for the red men ; but the messenger, who proved to be a villainous sensationist,—though of course we did not know this then,—added to his written reports the alarming story that he had met the hostile Indians in the mountains, only that very day, that they had pursued and shot at him,—the rascal even showing as proof the bullet-holes in his saddle,—that he barely escaped by rapid riding, and that they were probably but a few miles back, and on our path.

Here was serious business, indeed, for such a party ; burdened with overloaded wagons, tired horses and defenceless women and children ; and all on pleasure and not on war intent. Messengers were sent back to hasten to camp all stragglers, and to warn the Indian agent, with his load of goods and rifles in the Park, to be on his guard, and to come forward. The secret could be kept from no one ; the confusion and the excitement quickly grew intense ; and that peculiar recklessness or indifference as to ordinary matters, that follows the presence of a deep emotion, was singularly manifest. Tents were shabbily put up ; camp was disorderly made ; supper was eaten in that mechanical, forced way, without regard to quantity, quality or clean plates, that happens when death is in the house ; and elaborate toilets were dispensed with. But we huddled close in together ; the ani-

mals were picketed near at hand; our fire-arms were put in good order; and up and down the road, trusty sentinels were posted. On each side were high abrupt hills; it was a "lovely spot" for an ambuscade; but the nearest anybody came to being killed was when one of our sentinels, during the midnight blackness of storm, suddenly entered upon the ground of the other. Indian-shod in sandals, and moving with that noiseless, stealthy tread that hunters unconsciously adopt, the one was almost upon the other before the latter discovered a foreign presence. There was a sudden click of the rifle's cock, a peremptory demand for "personal explanation" without delay, and then,—a friendly instead of a deadly greeting.

But it was a night to remember, with a shiver,—lying down in that far-off wilderness with the reasonable belief that before morning there was an even chance of an attack of hostile Indians upon our camp, more than half of whose numbers were women and children,—after an evening spent in discussing the tender ways Indians had with their captives, illustrated from the personal knowledge of many present; aroused after the first hour's feverish rest by a new messenger from another quarter, galloping into camp, and shouting, as if we were likely to forget, that "the Indians were loose, and hell was to pay;" followed by the coming of furious storm of rain and hail and thunder and lightning, sucking under our tents, beating through them, to wet pillows and blankets,—at any other time a dire grievance, now hardly an added



trial; every ear stretched for unaccustomed sound, every heart beating anxiously, but every lip silent; all eagerly awaiting the slow-coming morning to bring renewal of life and the opportunity to go farther on and to safer retreats. To confess the unprosaic individual fact,—while I report the general truth,—this deponent had the soundest, sweetest night's sleep he had had in the mountains. Some natures will be perverse, and if one must be nervous, it is a great help to be conscious of it.

The experience brought serious thought to us all of the whole Indian question, that puzzle to Congress and eastern public opinion generally. And the failure, which this unexpected outbreak brings to the last and most promising experiment with the so-called but miscalled "peace policy," will probably lead to a more intelligent study and understanding of the whole subject by the country, and in the end to a resolute reformation of our past treatment of it. The truth here, as in many another dispute, lies between the two extremes of opinion and policy. The wild clamor of the border population for the indiscriminate extermination of the savages, as of wolves or other wild beasts and vermin, is as unintelligent and barbarous, as the long dominant thought of the East against the use of force, and its incident policy of treating the Indians as of equal responsibility and intelligence with the whites, are unphilosophical and impracticable. The conflict between these two theories, with the varying supremacy of each, has brought us nothing but disaster and disgrace; we have alternately treated

these vagrant children of the wilderness as if we were worse barbarians than themselves or downright fools. It is time we respected ourselves and commanded their respect. Now we do neither.

In the first place, the care of the Indians should be put into a single department at Washington. Its division between the war and interior secretaries is the cause of half our woes. The war office, as representing force, which is the first element in any successful dealing with ignorance and dependence, should monopolize their care. Then we should stop making treaties with tribes, cease putting them on a par with ourselves. We know they are not our equals; we know that our right to the soil, as a race capable of its superior improvement, is above theirs; and let us act openly and directly our faith. The earth is the Lord's; it is given by Him to the Saints for its improvement and development; and we are the Saints. This old Puritan premise and conclusion are the faith and practice of our people; let us hesitate no longer to avow it and act it to the Indian. Let us say to him, you are our ward, our child, the victim of our destiny, ours to displace, ours also to protect. We want your hunting-grounds to dig gold from, to raise grain on, and you must "move on." Here is a home for you, more limited than you have had; hither you must go, here you must stay; in place of your game, we will give you horses, cattle and sheep and grain; do what you can to multiply them and support yourselves; for the rest, it is our business to keep you from starving. You must not

leave this home we have assigned you; the white man must not come hither; we will keep you in and him out; when the march of our empire demands this reservation of yours, we will assign you another; but so long as we choose, this is your home, your prison, your play-ground.

Say and act all this as if we meant it, and mean it. If the tribes would go and submit peaceably, well and good; if they would not, use the force necessary to make them. Treat them just as a father would treat an ignorant, undeveloped child. If necessary to punish, punish; subject any way; and then use the kindness and consideration that are consistent with the circumstances. Use the best of these white men of the border, these Indian agents, many of whom are most capable and intelligent and useful men, to carry out and maintain this policy, so far as is possible; use the army so far as is necessary to enforce it, but withhold the soldiers whenever it is not,—for their presence on an Indian reservation is demoralizing to both parties,—but let all authority proceed from a single head, and that head represent a single force.

Above all, stop the treaty-making humbug. It is the direct parent of all our Indian woes and theirs too. Neither party keeps the bargain. The Indian is cheated; the Senate changes the provisions; a quiddling secretary of the interior or Indian commissioner refuses to carry it out; and from secretary down through contractors and agents, something is taken off the promise to the ear by each, till it is thoroughly broken to the hope of the poor savage.

What the Indian wants is to be fed and clothed; the treaty and those who fulfil it on our part may or may not do this for him, oftenest not; he cannot tell what or how much he wants beforehand for these ends, and if he did, and bargained for it, the chances are ten to one that he fails to get it; or getting it, squanders it at once, and now, hungry and naked, he goes forth to seek relief by the simplest law of nature; and hence his excuse and the excuse of his white sympathizers for war.

But establish Force for Bargain; Responsibility for Equality; Parentage for Antagonism; see that he is put apart and kept apart from the tide of settlement and civilization; that he has food and clothing, not in gross, but in detail; supplying him the means to help himself in the simplest forms possible,—stock raising is practicable to all the tribes, and tilling the soil possible to most,—and furnishing the rest from day to day; add such education as he will take, such elevation as he will be awakened to, and then let him die,—as die he is doing and die he must,—under his changed life

This is the best and all we can do. His game flies before the white man; we cannot restore it to him if we would; we would not if we could; it is his destiny to die; we cannot continue to him his original, pure barbaric life; he cannot mount to that of civilization; the mongrel marriage of the two that he embraces and must submit to, is killing him,—and all we can do is to smooth and make decent the pathway to his grave. All this is possible; and it need not cost so much as the mixed

state of war and bargaining that we have heretofore pursued. In the beginning there must be the display and the use of power to unlearn in the Indians the false ideas our alternately cowardly bargaining and cowardly bullying policy towards them has engendered; but once inaugurated, it will be simple and successful,—it will give us both peace and protection, and the Indians an easier path to the grave than lies before them now. More briefly and soldierly, General Sherman, now alive at last to the true nature of the question, expresses the new and necessary policy: "Peace and protection to the Indians upon the reservations; war and extermination if found off from them."

But to get back to our camp and ourselves. The scare wore off under the tonic of a cool, clear morning, with splendid visions of fresh fields of snow glancing in the sunlight, the arrival of our load of rifles and Indian goods safe, a good breakfast of trout and Governor Hunt's best griddle-cakes, and the following summons to horse for the Twin Lakes. Never party moved out of camp more gladly; and a few miles farther on, the Arkansas valley welcomed us into a new country, full of the light and the freshness and the joy of a newly awakened nature. There was a California roll to the hills that led down to the river; the sage bush that covered them was greener and more stalwart than that of the Middle Park; and the river bottom held a deeper toned grass, and was alive with grazing cattle; while the Sahwatch range of mountains, that divides the Arkansas valley from the Pacific waters, was continu-

ously higher than any we had yet looked up to, and its bold majestic peaks bore and brought far down their middles that thin new snow, which is such a touching type of purity, and is never seen without a real enthusiasm. Governor Bross and Vice-President Colfax, who had been off spending the night among the miners of an upper gulch, greeted us, too, with felicitations on our safety, and with a company of volunteer cavalry, that did not desert us until all apprehensions of danger had passed away.

Crossing the river, descending the valley, and then turning up among the western hills, over one, two lines of them, racing and roystering along with our new companions, and in our new joys, we suddenly came out over the Twin Lakes, and stopped. The scene was, indeed, enchanting. At our feet, a half a mile away, was the lower of two as fine sheets of water as mountain ever shadowed, or wind rippled, or sun illuminated. They took their places at once in the goodly company of the Cumberland Lakes of England, of Lucerne in Switzerland, of Como and Laggiore in north Italy, of Tahoe and Donner in California, and no second rank among them all. One is about three miles by a mile and a half; the other say two miles by one; and only a fifty-rod belt of grass and grove separates them. Above them on two sides sharply rise,—dark with trees and rocks until the snow caps with white,—the mountains of the range; sparsely-wooded hills of grass and sage bush mount gracefully in successive benches on a third,—it was over these that we came into their presence; while to the south a nar-

row, broken valley, pushed rapidly by the mountains towards the Arkansas, carries their outlet stream to its home in the main river. Clear, hard, sandy beaches alternate with walls of rock and low marshy meadows in making the immediate surroundings of both lakes. The waters are purity itself, and trout abound in them.

Here we camped for that and the next day, which was Sunday; restored our Indian-broken nerves; caught trout and picked raspberries; bathed in the lakes; rode up and around them; looked into their waters, and on over them to the mountains,—first green, then blue, then black, finally white, and then higher to clouds, as changing in color under storm, under sun, under moon, under lightning. Every variety of scene, every change and combination of cloud and color were offered us in these two days; and we worshiped, as it were, at the very fountains of beauty, where its every element in nature lay around, before, and above us.

Also, not to live forever in poetry, we patched our clothes, greased our boots, washed our handkerchiefs and towels,—one would dry while another was being washed, in the dry, breezy air,—and ate boiled onions and raspberry short-cake to repletion. Bayard Taylor's letters are at least a guide to the opportunities for good dinners in Colorado; and ostensibly with the purpose to explore the lakes, and see the falls in the river above, possibly with a thought to fall upon such hospitality as he experienced in the little neighboring village of Dalton,—another collection of vacant cabins, with a new

court-house, and only two occupied tenements,—a few of us stole quietly off for a Sunday excursion.

We circled the lakes, as beautiful in detail as in grand effect; picked out many a charming camping-ground for future visits; found along the shores one or two resident families, and a tent with a stove-pipe through it, where a Chicago invalid was spending the summer, gaining vigorous strength and permanent health, and drying quantities of trout,—think of trout so plenty as to suggest drying them!—followed up the bed of the stream two miles or more above the lakes to a very pretty waterfall, and a deep pool, worn out of solid rock, thick with visible trout, whom we could poke with long sticks, but could not seduce with fattest of grasshoppers; lunched off the mountain raspberry vines; tracked a grizzly bear; and looked up the far-stretching gorge through rocks and bushes and vines that were very seducing,—but came back to Dalton in time to get our invitation to dinner. There was white table-cloth, and chairs, and fresh beefsteak, and mealy potatoes, and soft onions, and cream for coffee, and raspberry short-cake “to kill,” and a lady and gentleman for hostess and host; everything and more and better even than Taylor had two years before. Going back by the lakes to camp just at sunset, they were in their best estate of color, of light and shade; and water and mountain and sky met and mingled, and led on the eye from one glory to another, till the joy of the spirit overcame and subdued and elevated the satisfaction of the senses.



## X.

### FROM THE TWIN LAKES TO DENVER.

Down the Arkansas Valley—A Picturesque Scene—A Sensation—Over into South Park—Who were with us, and How we Made Camp and Spent the Night—Governor Bross Grinding Coffee—Governor Hunt's "Slapjacks"—An Evening in Camp with the Indians—Out of the Park, and into the Plains—Through "the Garden of the Gods"—Grand Entree into Denver.

DENVER, Colorado, September, 1868.

WE entered the Arkansas valley so far up that its head was visible. It leads to the lowest pass in all the mountains over to the Pacific slope, not rising above the timber line. Like all the passes of the range, it is ambitious of a railroad, and certainly seems more reasonably so than many others. But for many years to come our continental railroads will find lower and smoother paths both north and south of Colorado.

The plan of our journey was to go from the Twin Lakes down the Arkansas, around the outside of South Park, so nearly as the rock-bound banks of the river would allow, through Canon City and Colorado City, and up by the Plains, under the eastern line of the mountains, to Denver. Thus we should have circuited all the great central portions

of the state, and except San Luis Park, which we should have left in the south, have seen all the principal centers of her population, all the distinguishing features of her geography and her natural beauty. But this would have taken us directly into the path of the now rampantly hostile Indians; so we drew in our lines, and made a narrower circle across the South Park, and up to Denver. We lost little or nothing that was distinctive, though some repetitions and modifications of beautiful scenery already or to be made familiar to us. But I urge all who come after us to follow our intended route, and even to extend their trip over into San-Luis Park. Here, though the testimony is contradictory, will be found a country rich in beauty and resources, and with some features not characteristic of the other great Parks.

First we rode some twelve miles down the valley. With a mounted escort of about twenty gallant young gold miners, and the addition of two or three camping parties that sought our company home as a sedative to the nervousness of the Indian stories, we made up a grand "outfit." All together, there were from seventy-five to one hundred persons, and as many animals, as it moved back over the mountains into South Park again. The first eight miles were through a broken, hilly country, the mountains coming down to the river on each side in great gashes or rolls, occasionally a broad inclined plain, frequently a dry ravine. The soil was light and cold, and sage bush and coarse grass and thin forests were its products, other than gold. Of the

latter it holds in deposit a plentiful sprinkling almost everywhere; and we passed the prosperous mining villages of Granite and Cash Creek, their peoples tearing up the ground all about in eager search for the precious metal.

Little canyons and big canyons drove our road away from the river and over hills and bluffs for much of these eight miles; but at the end we came down into a wider and richer opening, and there spread before us a fine agricultural section, the garden of the upper Arkansas. For thirty-five miles now, the river, hugging the hills on the east, lays open a broad, clean, rising plain of from one to ten miles in width, before the rocks and forests of the western mountains begin. Beyond these thirty-five miles, the river canyons again for a long course, and farming is at an end, and travel down the valley is turned off into South Park till the stream emerges again from its rock embrasures. Tributaries of the main stream slash and fertilize this great meadow; and it bears large crops of grain, grass and roots. Some twenty farmers have brought under profitable cultivation about seven hundred acres of this valley; the mines in the valleys above and over in South Park furnish the markets; a Frenchman, one of the first of these ranchmen, and whose bread and milk we devoured as we went by, returned an income of from twelve to fifteen thousand dollars two years ago, as the results of a single season's farming, crops being good and prices high; and, spite of grasshoppers and drouth, the business is uniformly more successful than mining.

Crossing the river through the hospitable Frenchman's grounds, we turned up the hills, and began to leave this inviting country almost as soon as we had entered it. It beckoned us back by scenes of exquisite beauty, clothed in warm sunshine, and at every convenient spot in the ascending hills, we lingered for longing looks, up and down, and across its lines. All around on the lower hills, down to the river, guarding its passage, were magnificent ruins of mountains; huge boulders; fantastic shaped columns; lines of palisades; the kernels which water could not wash nor abrasion wear away; groves of rocks; fortresses upon the river shore,—the Rhine is not more thickly peopled with ruined castles; with pines and aspens and coarse bushes growing upon and among them all, including a new species, called *pinyon*, a stunted, sprawling, thick-growing pine, looking, as set in a grove a little way off, like an old apple orchard. Starting from the opposite bank, the open, rising meadow, a great inclined plain of gray and green, stretching miles away up the sides of the grand Sahwach Mountains, whose tops formed a line of snow fields that overlooked and cooled the whole warm scene of sunshine and life below. Up and down hills we toiled all the afternoon, refreshed only and yet tantalized by occasional glimpses of the beautiful valley behind, which seemed to spread out all its beauty of form, of scene, of color, to harrow us for so early deserting it.

The only other sensation of the afternoon's ride was the sudden dashing into our line from behind

of a dozen or twenty Ute chiefs and warriors. As we had not learned to know one kind of Indians from another, their galloping in among us stirred the blood a trifle; but we soon found they were friends, and pairing off among our mounted men, they were grunting and gesticulating their story into all our ears. They proved to be the leaders of a band of Utes living down in the San Luis Park country, who had learned, in the mysterious and speedy manner of savages and wildernesses, of the uprising of the hostile Indians of the Plains, and of the presence of Governor Hunt and our party in this region, and so, traveling day and night, they had hurried up to meet us, and see if they were wanted, either to protect us, or take the field against their and our enemies. Not without a selfish thought, too, perhaps, for blankets and beef. They camped with us that night, were well-fed and well-promised, and went back home the next day. The Governor had neither authority nor means to put them into the field against the Plain Indians; nor was it clear that there was any occasion for it.

We pushed up near to the tops of the mountains, riding far into the evening, before camping, and finally pitched our tents in a great meadow, heavy with grass, and interspersed with little wooded knolls, within and around one of which we built our fires and laid our blankets for the night. We needed them all, for it was dreary cold before morning, and water froze in our cups on the way from the brook half a mile off. But the forenoon's sun and saddle brought summer warmth back; and

we were not long in getting over the range and down into South Park. We entered it about at the middle, and it seemed tamer and less green than in the upper sections. Alkali and salt deposits whitened the surface in great patches, and so rich are the springs with salt at one spot, that a large establishment for evaporating the water and making salt is in operation, and holds a profitable monopoly of the salt market of the state. We made a fine noon camp by one of the everlasting Plattes, and trout-catching was brisk for an hour.

Here, too, we had another Indian raid,—the outposts of our old Middle Park Utes, who had heard the story of the Plain Indians coming up into the South Park, and moved over in a body to dispossess them, came wildly and joyfully riding in upon us, a dozen or two, with some white friends from Fairplay. So our escort doubled, and we traveled across the Park with as large and as motley a retinue as ever Oriental prince moved among over the deserts of Asia. Only, with true American individuality, we scattered wildly about, and lingered or hurried at pleasure over the wide open plains, dotted with occasional hill and lake, the latter repeated by mirage in the distance, or by the deceptive resemblance of an alkali field, and circled by the far-distant, far-reaching mountains. Everything else failing or fatiguing, from sheer abundance,—mountain, field, grass, forest, color, the atmosphere remained, a feeling of beauty that ministered to several senses without ever palling the appetite of either.

We made grand camp that night about a mile beyond Fairplay, on a gently sloping plateau, backed by a thick aspen grove, watered at its base by a fresh stream, fronted by the broad Park meadows, looking towards sundown, and taking the best light of the full moon through its nightly circle of the horizon. The dozen or twenty Utes enlisted to go through with us to Denver, and made a camp for themselves a few rods away among the trees. The mounted men were usually the first in camp; they stripped their animals of saddles and bridles and blankets, and sent them galloping off for grass and water. As fast as the wagons came up, they took their places in the grand circle of the camp-ground, and were unloaded of tents, baggage and provisions, and their horses loosened to join the others. Smooth spots were chosen for the tents in a semi-circle, and the tents put up by the most adroit in that business. There was one for Governor Hunt and his family; another for Mr. Witter and his, consisting of himself, his wife (Mr. Colfax's sister), a babe eight weeks old,—think of that, you tender mothers in four-walled and close-roofed houses in civilization!—and Mr. Colfax's mother and father; a third for the young ladies; Governor Bross and the Vice-President used one of the large covered wagons for lodgings; my friend Lord and myself had a little tent by ourselves; and the rest, despising such paltry interventions of effeminacy, lay around in the softest, shadiest places, under the wagons, under trees, always near the fires. The little sheet-iron cooking-stoves, one for each of the

two messes into which our original party was divided, were simultaneously planted and fired up. The open fires were located, and the Vice-President, Governor Bross, Mr. Thomas of the Rocky Mountain News, and any other idle and otherwise incompetent persons were detailed to fetch wood for them. Soon a huge fire blazed in front of each tent. Then the wood-haulers became water-carriers. Next the fastidious made their toilets; and Governor Hunt called for assistant cooks.

This night we were to have an extra meal. To start with, and especially to provide quantity for the capacious Indian stomachs, a herd of cattle were driven up from the meadow, and Mr. Curtis, the Indian interpreter, passing them in review, rifle in hand, and, choosing a fat young cow, sent a ball unerringly into her forehead, and she fell dead instantly. It was the first time I had ever seen this speedy, humane manner of butchering; and Mr. Bergh, the anti-cruelty man, ought to demand its universal use. The animal was soon cut up, and a few choice pieces brought to our camp, but the Indians carried off the bulk to theirs, and, with forked sticks and open fire, and a little salt, were soon filling up their waste places. The village furnished us cream and fresh supplies of sugar. Soon we had beefsteak frying, mush and milk in proper progress, oyster soup and tomatoes stewing, hominy warming, a huge section of ribs of beef roasting on a forked stick before the fire, coffee and tea brewing, biscuits baking at one mess, and slapjacks browning at another. Governor Bross earned his



supper by grinding coffee for half an hour, and afterwards, his hand having grown supple, you could have seen him, seated on an empty whisky-keg, turning the griddle-cakes to perfection; and your correspondent won his glory and victual by making the "long-sweetening," *i. e.* white sugar melted into a permanent syrup. Then there were canned peaches and raspberries for dessert. All this, seated on our haunches on the ground or on bended knees around the board and box that served for tables, each with a tin plate and cup, and knife and fork and spoon to match, and all with appetites worthy the food. We generally "boarded around," that is ate at the mess which happened to have the most inviting meal, and as there is no knowledge so satisfactory as the experimental on such a subject, it commonly resulted in our eating at both. It is surprising how excellent food can be had in such a camping expedition with a little painstaking and tact in providing and cooking. Governor Hunt was master of all the arts of camp-life, and under his care we "fared sumptuously every day." The slap-jacks and their "long-sweetening" were an incomparable dish, and took the place of bread at Governor Hunt's table.

Supper over, and the dishes washed, in which last operation "equal rights" were sometimes allowed the women, all gathered around the central camp-fires, with shawls, buffalo robes and blankets for protection from the ground; our friends traveling in company, who had made separate camps adjoining, came over to spend the evening; to-night our

escort party from the Arkansas valley had supped with us, and were about to say farewell; and their Indian successors, having become happy and hilarious, were invited and welcomed into the circle; and thus re-enforced and diversified, we made a gala night of it. It was a very curious scene indeed. The blaze of the camp-fire contrasted sharply with the light of the moon, and brought out in fine relief all the hundred varying faces and strange costumes gathered around. Speeches were made and songs sung; Mr. Colfax addressed the Utes, and his words were interpreted to them by Mr. Curtis, and the reply of their chief to us; and then we called for songs from them. Stimulated by a pile of white sugar that Governor Hunt threw down at their feet, they got up and responded with spirit. Standing in a row, shoulders touching, and swaying to and fro in a long line by one motion, they chanted in a low, guttural way, all on one key, and only musical as it was correct monotone. Then there were more songs and sentiments from the whites; the Indians were dismissed; our kind friends from the Arkansas said good-by; and soon the fires of camp were dull, and all its life still in sleep,—a sleep of trust and safety, there under the open sky, with a village of all sorts of people a mile away, and a band of savages within six rods. It was all so incongruous and anomalous to our home thought and life; and yet we felt as safe, and were as safe, as in double-bolted houses on police-patrolled streets. Only the contrasts forced themselves into the wakeful moments of night and morning, as we

turned over and refastened the blankets, and piled more baggage over chilly feet, and peered out into the dead stillness of the camp, broken may-be by the dull snoring of a heavy sleeper, and the far-off browsing of a greedy mule; sounds brought near and made loud by the hush of human life, and the reign of nature's peace.

Out of the Park and into the hills that separate it from the Plains the next day. The way was familiar, the road for the most part good. We scattered along, two or three together, through five or six miles; closing up for lunch, and again for night camp. Our Indian escort, familiar with every rod of the country, roamed at will, taking short cuts over the hills, and appearing first in the rear, then far in advance. We had a beautiful camp, after twenty-five miles ride, in a narrow but long little valley, that bowed the sun out at one end, as it welcomed the moon up at the other. The next day, too, all among the hills, riding another twenty-five miles; the roads improving; ranches thickening,—no lack now of buttermilk or cream; travelers grew numerous; daily newspapers coming in; and the end dawning. It was a pleasant mountain country, open, free, lightly wooded, abundantly watered, and the valleys rich for grass and grain. The streams, too, hold trout, and the hills are thick with raspberries,—it is up here that the Denverites come for their briefer mountain excursions, and this is the common road for commerce and for pleasure into the South Park.

Our night camp now was the last of the excursion. It was near the junction of the roads lead-

ing to Denver by the Plains and to Idaho through the mountains. There was a rivalry among the cooking-stoves for the best farewell supper; but the slapjacks gave Governor Hunt the victory,—there was no equalling, no resisting them. Around the camp-fire, we “talked it over;” hilarious with a vein of sadness; humorous with a touch of pathos; Mr. Colfax made his excellent speech, beginning, “this is the saddest moment of my life;” we sang *auld-lang-syne*, and prepared for an early start in the morning.

The breakfast dishes were packed dirty,—“after us the Deluge,”—and camp was broken by eight o’clock with the cry, “Ho, for Denver.” The going out of the mountains was very fine. The several miles through Turkey Creek Canyon, the road winding along with the stream at the bottom of a high gorge of rocks, were fresh and exhilarating; we had gone around canyons before, painfully and laboriously; now to follow one by a narrow but firm road offered new and picturesque views. This was not unlike the *Via Mala* of Switzerland; and coming out, the road circled a high precipitous hill midway in its side, an expensive and excellent bit of road-making, such as is rarely seen anywhere in America.

Here we overlooked the grand ocean of the Plains, and came upon the struggles of nature to leave off mountain and begin plain. Along here, as at other points below, there seems to have been an especial and antagonistic fold thrown up almost abruptly from the level plain. Pike’s Peak, which is distinct from the main range, is the chief endeavor or

culmination of this throe of the formation. And around it, as here, are grouped monuments or remains of mountains, alike grotesque, commanding, impressive; taking all shapes, and giving the thought that somebody greater and higher than man had made here familiar home. The collection of these ruins near Pike's Peak and Colorado City, which we missed seeing because of the Indian war, is called "The Garden of the Gods," and the name not unfitly clothes the impression they make. They are not boulders or piles of rock, but what is left of mountains washed and worn away by waters and winds. The body is a fine reddish granite; and they stand sentinelled about upon the bare closing bluffs of the hills, with forms of such majesty and such personality, as arouses one's wonder and deepens curiosity into awe.

Down into the last ravine, and out upon the long rolls of the Plains. The Platte and its branches wind with their gardens of grain and their groves of trees about in the far distance, making a pleasantly variegated map of green of the vast picture. Bear Creek especially offers a charming principality of its own. And far in the thin haze the steeples and blocks of Denver stand upon the sky. Herds of grazing cattle are scattered along on both sides of the road; and with a common hunger for home and civilization, beasts and drivers spur each other into rapid gait. Our day's ride of twenty-five miles is finished by two o'clock, and we stop before entering the town to "serry the ranks," and try the unaccustomed draughts of a suburban brewery.

A circus would have been a poor show compared to the procession that then passed into Denver. First were the faithful Utes, gay with bright blankets and yellow and red paint; a bride among them, beaded and bespangled from head to foot; then our own cavaliers and cavalieresses, their plumage not over gay after a fortnight's mountain use, their animals worn and sorry from hard riding and no oats; next carriages, ambulances and baggage-wagons, out of which peered flapping sun bonnets and browned faces, with every other wheel bound in huge sticks from the forest to keep them from dropping to pieces; and finally Governor Evans's carriage, altogether minus two wheels, and just lifted from the ground by two poles that dragged their slow length along behind. Despite the solemnity of the town over the Indian raids; despite the dignity of demeanor due to high officials, Ute chiefs, Colorado chiefs, Illinois chiefs, Washington fathers,—the street broke into a horse, neigh a mule laugh that rolled along from block to block, and turned the back doors out in affright lest Cherry Creek had come to town again. And then we were dismissed to assure our friends of our identity, and reconstruct ourselves.

## XI.

### MINES, MINING AND MINERS.

Review of the Mining Interests of Colorado—Present Condition of Affairs in the Quartz Centers—Central City, Georgetown, Mill City, Empire City, etc.—Renewal of Gulch-Mining, its Profits, and its Promises—Present Yield of Gold and Silver, and its Certain Increase—Population of Colorado, and the Idiosyncracies of its Miners.

DENVER, Colorado, September, 1868.

IT remains for me to speak of the industrial interests, growth, prosperity, and promise, of Colorado. These have only been incidentally alluded to so far; but they deserve special exhibition. The change in its material affairs and prospects, since we were here three years ago, is most marked and healthy. Then, the original era of speculation, of waste, of careless and unintelligent work, and as little of it as possible, of living by wit instead of labor, of reliance upon eastern capital instead of home industry, was, if not at its hight, still reigning, but with signs of decay and threatening despair. The next two years, 1866 and 1867, affairs became desperate; the population shrunk; mines were abandoned; mills stopped; eastern capital, tired of waiting for promised returns, dried

up its fountains; and the secrets of the rich ores seemed unfathomable. Residents, who could not get away, were put to their trumps for a living; and economy and work were enforced upon all. Thus weeded out, thus stimulated, the population fell back on the certainties; such mining as was obviously remunerative was continued; the doubtful and losing abandoned; the old and simple dirt washing for gold was resumed, and followed with more care; and farming rose in respectability and promise. The discovery and opening of specially rich silver mines near Georgetown kept hope and courage alive, and freshened speculation in a new quarter; but the main fact of the new era was that the people went to work, became self-reliant, and, believing that they "had a good thing" out here, undertook to prove it to the world by intelligent and economic industry.

These were the kernel years of Colorado; they proved her; they have made her. Her gold product went down, probably, to a million dollars say, in each of 1866 and 1867; but it began at once, under the new order of things, to rise; and agriculture also at once shot up and ahead, and directly assumed, as it has in California, the place of the first interest, the great wealth. No more flour, no more corn, no more potatoes at six cents to twelve cents a pound freight, from the Missouri River; in one year Colorado became self-supporting in food; in the second an exporter, the feeder of Montana, the contractor for the government posts and the Pacific Railroad; and now, in the third year,



with food cheaper than in "the States," she forces the Mississippi and Missouri valleys to keep their produce at home or send it East. She feeds the whole line of the Pacific Railroad this side the continental divide, and has even been sending some of her vegetables to Omaha. Her gold and silver product is up to at least two millions this year, got out at a profit of from twenty-five to fifty per cent., is now at the rate of nearly if not quite three millions, and will certainly surpass that sum in 1869. Her agricultural products must be twice as much at least, certainly four millions for 1868, and perhaps six millions; though it is difficult to make as certain estimates in this particular, and the Indians have worked great mischief with the ingathering of the crops this fall.

Central City, in the midst of the mountains on the north branch of Clear Creek, continues to be the center of the gold quartz-mining; and business there was never more healthily prosperous than now. All its stamp mills are in operation, and more are being erected; for after wearily waiting through two or three years for more effective processes for reducing the ores, their owners have set these in operation again, simplified, perfected and economized their working, and, from about one hundred and forty mills and seven hundred and fifty stamps, are now producing near fifty thousand dollars of gold a week, at a cost for both mining and milling of from two-thirds to three-quarters that sum. Another season will see say fifty mills and one thousand stamps at work in this valley. The most

valuable ores of the neighboring mines are not put through this process, but are sold at about one hundred dollars a ton to Professor Hill's smelting or Swansea works, now established here, and working the richer and sulphuretted ores with an economy and completeness that the plain stamp mills cannot do. The ores worked in the latter form the principal product of the mines, and produce under the stamps about twenty-five dollars a ton, while the cost for mining and milling is about fifteen dollars. If steam is used the cost goes up to twenty dollars. The Swansea and the plain stamp mill are the only "processes" now in use in this valley. Professor Hill has proved the success and profit of the former, at least for all high-class ores. He is giving from eighty to one hundred and twenty-five dollars a ton for such ore, and probably makes from thirty to forty dollars a ton on it; and his purchases amount to some twenty thousand dollars a month. He is already doubling his furnaces. But the problem is to apply his process profitably to lower class ores; to such as hold from twenty-five to fifty dollars a ton, and of which there are almost literally mountains in Colorado. The free or simple gold ores of this grade can be worked well enough by stamps and amalgamation, as in Central City and California, and the cost thereof can be ultimately reduced to probably one-half of present prices; but these constitute only a fraction of the rich ores of Colorado. Most of them hold both silver and gold, combined with sulphurets of iron, and a process which gets one leaves the other, except, of course,

smelting, which at present is too expensive for any but highly-freighted ores. This is why thousands of mines are unworked to-day ; why scores of mills with unperfected processes, or plain stamps, stand idle, rotting and rusting in all parts of the territory ; and why deserted cabins and vacant villages lie scattered in all the valleys about,—telling their tragic tales of loss and disappointment, monuments of the enthusiasm and the credulity of miner and capitalist, who labored and invested wildly and before their time.

Some silver mine discoveries have recently been made in the Central City region ; indeed, there is silver in all the gold ores, and gold in all the silver ores of the territory, and lead and copper in most besides ; but the head-quarters of the silver business is at Georgetown, ten or a dozen miles over the mountains from Central City, at the head of the south branch of Clear Creek. Around and above this now thriving and most beautifully located of the principal mining villages of Colorado ; at nine thousand, ten thousand, on even to twelve and thirteen thousand feet above the sea level, almost unapproachable save in summer, and then only by pack mules or on foot, are many marvelously rich silver veins in the rocks. Hundreds of mines have been opened ; but only a dozen or twenty are now being actually worked with profitable results. The rest await purchasers from their “prospectors,” or capital to develop them. The ore from the leading mines ranges from one hundred to one thousand dollars a ton. Only two mills for reducing the ore

are in operation; one treats the second class ore, such as will average say two hundred dollars a ton, reducing it by crushing or stamping, then washing with salt to oxydize it, and then amalgamating with quicksilver, at a cost of from fifty to one hundred dollars a ton; and the other smelting the higher priced ores, at a cost probably of one hundred to two hundred dollars a ton. The latter establishment buys outright most of the ore it reduces, and has paid all the way from five hundred to six hundred and seventy-five dollars a ton for it. Both processes get out from seventy-five to ninety per cent of the assay value of the ore; but they are imperfect and expensive, and much of the best ore is sent East for treatment. The Equator mine, owned by a party of railroad men from Chicago, is one of the two or three prizes here, and sends its first-class ore, worth from nine hundred to one thousand dollars a ton, all the way to Newark, N. J., to be reduced. Thirty tons were packed for shipment the day I was there. The superior yield under the closer and more economical treatment at Newark more than pays for the freight, which is but forty-eight dollars a ton. The Equator mine claims to have yielded one hundred thousand dollars' worth of ore this season, and brags of a million next. Only a portion of its ore taken out is yet worked. There are several, perhaps half a dozen other mines nearly as good as this.

Georgetown now has a population of about three thousand, and the best hotel in the territory. It is one of the places that every tourist should visit,

partly for its silver mines, partly because the road to it up the South Clear Creek is through one of the most interesting sections of the mountains, and partly that it is the starting-point for the ascension of Gray's Peaks. The traveler can go up to the top of that mountain and back to Georgetown between breakfast and supper; and if he will not take his tour by the Snake and Blue Rivers to the Middle or South Park, he should certainly make this day's excursion from Georgetown. Central City and its neighborhood are much less interesting to the mere pleasure traveler. That town, with its four thousand or five thousand inhabitants, is crowded into a narrow gulch, rather than valley, torn with floods, and dirty with the debris of mills and mines that spread themselves over everything.

Scattered about, in Boulder District, on the Snake, over on the Upper Arkansas, up among the gulches of the South Park hills, are a few more quartz mills, some in operation, more not; but the principal business of quartz mining is done in the sections I have named, in Gilpin and Clear Creek counties. Mill City, Empire, and Idaho are villages in this section, with their mines and mills, doing a little something, struggling to prove their capacity, but hardly in a single case making money, partly because of the poverty of the ore, but chiefly because it is refractory, and will not yield up its possessions to any known and reasonably cheap process. Time, patience, and cheaper labor will bring good results out of many of these investments; but others will have to go to swell the

great number of failures that stand confessed all over this as all over every other mining country.

There are great tunneling schemes proposed or started in the Georgetown silver district, by which the various ore veins of a single mountain are to be cut deep down in their depths, and their wealth brought out of a single mouth in the valley, at a much cheaper rate than by digging down from the top on the vein's course and hauling up. The "Burleigh drill" from Massachusetts, that has been in use in the Hoosac tunnel, has been introduced here for this purpose; and successful mining on a grand scale will soon take this form, not only here, but in Nevada, and indeed in most of our mining States.

The other form of mining, known as gulch-mining or dirt-washing, is increasing again, and has employed full three hundred men this season. Fifty to seventy-five of these are at work in the Clear Creek and Boulder valleys; but the great body of them are scattered through Park, Lake, and Summit counties, on the Snake and other tributaries of the Blue River; on the upper Plattes in South Park; and on the upper Arkansas and its side valleys. They have averaged twelve dollars a day to a man; but the season for this kind of mining is less than half the year, in some places because of ice and snow; in most for lack of water. The year's product from gulch-mining will certainly foot up half a million dollars, probably a hundred thousand more. New gulches and fresh "bars," or deposits of sand, brought down from the hills by

the streams, have been opened this year in preparation for another year's work; and it is not unreasonable to look for a million dollars from gulch-mining next year.

These figures seem small compared with the amounts reported to be got out in the years following the first gold discoveries in 1859,—in '60 to '64,—when one year's production ran up as high as six or eight millions, and for several years averaged probably four; when hundreds if not thousands of eager miners were gathered in a single gulch, and ran over its sands with a reckless waste, taking off the cream of the deposits, and then moving on to new places, and, finally exhausting both their own first enthusiasm, and all the best or most obvious chances, turning away in disgust at a "played out" territory. But the business is now resumed in a more systematic, intelligent and economical way; labor is cheaper; miners are satisfied with more moderate returns; and there is really almost no limit to these valleys and banks, under the hills and along the rivers, whose sands and gravel hold specks of gold in sufficient quantity to pay for washing over. An intelligent investigator of the subject tells me that the whole of South Park would pay three to four dollars a day for the labor of washing it over. But I pray it may not be done while I live to come to these Mountains and the Parks; for gold-washing leaves a terrible waste in its track.

In the valley of the Blue and its tributaries, more extensive works for gulch-mining exist than in any other district; there, not less than eighty-four miles

of ditches to bring water to wash out the gold with have been constructed, and the amount of water they carry in the aggregate is eight thousand seven hundred and fifty inches. One of these ditches is eleven miles long; two others seven miles each; another five, and so on; and they cost from one thousand to twelve hundred dollars a mile. Says Mr. Thomas of the Rocky Mountain News, from whose careful and elaborate investigations this summer and fall, I draw many of the facts of this letter:—"The facilities and opportunities for gulch-mining in this county (Summit) are equal if not superior to any in Colorado. Many of the gulches, now worked, will last for years to come, while much ground remains yet untouched. The Blue River will pay for ten miles or more, at the rate of five to ten dollars per day to the man. Many places will pay from three to five dollars per day to the man, and will be worked when labor becomes lower and living cheaper."

In the Granite district of the Upper Arkansas, quartz gold is found in simple combinations, or "free," as in California, which can be mined and reduced for eight to ten dollars a ton, while it yields from fifteen to one hundred dollars; but these are ores from near the surface, and it is yet a problem whether they will not change on getting down in the veins, as in other Colorado mines, and become "refractory," and impossible of working at a profit by any yet known process.

The Cinnamon mines, just over the southern border in New Mexico, have attracted much attention



for the last two years. Several quartz mills are in operation there, but the main yield, so far, is from the gulches, and the total product this year is about a quarter of a million dollars. San Luis Park, too, is believed to be rich in mineral deposits; some promising discoveries have already been made there; and indeed in almost every quarter of the state are the beginnings of developments that inspire great faiths, each in its own particular circle of prospectors and prophets.

There is apparently no limit, in fact, to the growth of the mineral interests of Colorado. The product this year is from two millions to two and a half; next year it will be at least a million more, perhaps a million and a half, or four millions; and the increase will go on indefinitely. For the business is now taken hold of in the right way; pursued for the most part on strictly business principles; and every year must show improvements in the ways and means of mining and treating the ores. The mountains are just full of ores holding fifteen to fifty dollars' worth of the metals per ton; and the only question, as to the amount to be got out, is one of labor and cost as compared with the profits of other pursuits.

The settled population of Colorado is now at least fifty thousand, perhaps sixty thousand. About one-quarter is Mexican, all in the southern section, and ignorant and debased to a shameful degree. The rest are as good a population as any new state can boast of. They are drawn from all eastern sources; but the New England leaven, though possibly not the New England personality, is domi-

nant in their ambition, their education, their morality, their progressive spirituality. The pioneer miners, the "prospectors," are a class of characters by themselves. Properly they never mine; to dig out and reduce ore is not their vocation; but they discover and open mines, and sell them, if they can; at any rate move on to discover others. Men of intelligence, often cultivated, generally handsome, mostly moral, high-toned and gallant by nature, sustained by a faith that seems imperishable, putting their last dollar, their only horse, possibly their best blanket, into a hole that invites their hopes, working for wages only to get more means to live while they prospect anew and further, they suffer much, and yet enjoy a great deal. Faith is comfort, and that is theirs; they will "strike it rich" some day; and then, and not till then, will they go back to the old Ohio, Pennsylvania or New England homes, and cheer the fading eyes of fathers and mothers, and claim the patient-waiting, sad-hearted girls, to whom they pledged their youthful loves. The vicious and the loafers, the gamblers and the murderers, have mostly "moved on;" what is left is chiefly golden material; and the men and the mines and farms of Colorado, all alike and together, are in a healthy and promising condition, and insure for her a large growth and a generous future. The two things she lacketh chiefly now are appreciation at the East and women; what she has of both are excellent, but in short supply; but the Railroad will speedily fill the vacuums.

## XII.

### THE AGRICULTURE OF COLORADO.

The Farming Interests of Colorado; their Great Attainment and Greater Promise—Details of the Harvest and of Prices—Stock-Raising—The Birth and Growth of Manufactures—The Colorado Bread—Coal and Iron—Professor Agassiz among the Mountains, looking after his Glaciers—End of the Vacation—Summing Up of its Experiences—Colorado the Switzerland of America—How to Travel There.

DENVER, Colorado, September, 1868.

INEXHAUSTIBLE as is Colorado's mineral wealth; progressive as henceforth its development; predominant and extensive as are its mountains; high even as are its valleys and plains,—in spite of all seeming impossibilities and rivalries, Agriculture is already and is destined always to be its dominant interest. Hence my faith in its prosperity and its influence among the central states of the Continent. For agriculture is the basis of wealth, of power, of morality; it is the conservative element of all national and political and social growth; it steadies, preserves, purifies, elevates. Full one-third of the territorial extent of Colorado,—though this third average as high as Mount Washington,—is fit, more, rich for agricultural purposes. The

grains, the vegetables and the fruits of the temperate zone grow and ripen in profusion; and through the most of it, cattle and sheep can live and fatten the year around without housing or feeding. The immediate valleys or bottom lands of the Arkansas and Platte and Rio Grande and their numerous tributaries, after they debouch from the mountains, are of rich vegetable loams, and need no irrigation. The uplands or plains are of a coarse, sandy loam, rich in the phosphates washed from the minerals of the mountains, and are not much in use yet except for pastures. When cultivated, more or less irrigation is introduced, and probably will always be indispensable for sure crops of roots and vegetables; but for the small, hard grains, I have no idea it will be generally found necessary. It is a comparatively dry climate, indeed; but showers are frequent, and extend over a considerable part of the spring and summer.

At a rough estimate, the agricultural wealth of Colorado last year was a million bushels of corn, half a million of wheat, half a million of barley, oats and vegetables, 50,000 head of cattle, and 75,000 to 100,000 sheep. The increase this year is at least 50 per cent; in the northern counties at least 100. Indeed, the agriculture of the northern counties, between the Pacific Railroad at Cheyenne and Denver, which has grown to be full half that of the whole state, is the development almost entirely of the last three years. South, in the Arkansas and Rio Grande valleys, the farming and the population are older, going back to before the gold

discoveries. This is the Spanish-Mexican section, and was formerly a part of New Mexico. Its agriculture is on a large but rough scale, and only the immense crops and the simple habits of the people, chiefly ignorant, degraded Mexicans, permit it to be profitable. The soil yields wonderfully, north and south. There is authentic evidence of 316 bushels of corn to the acre in the neighborhood of Denver this season; 60 to 75 bushels of wheat to the acre are very frequently reported; also 250 bushels of potatoes; and 60 to 70 of both oats and barley. These are exceptional yields, of course, and yet not of single acres, but of whole fields, and on several farms in different counties. Probably 30 bushels is the average product of wheat; of corn no more, for the hot nights that corn loves are never felt here; of oats say 50, and of barley 40, for the whole state. Exhaustion of the virgin freshness of the soil will tend to decrease these averages in the future; but against that we may safely put improved cultivation and greater care in harvesting.

The melons and vegetables are superb; quality, quantity and size are alike unsurpassed by any garden cultivators in the East. The irrigated gardens of the upper parts of Denver fairly riot in growth of fat vegetables; while the bottom lands of the neighboring valleys are at least equally productive without irrigation. Think of cabbages weighing from 50 to 60 pounds each! And potatoes from 5 to 6 pounds, onions 1 to 2 pounds, and beets 6 to 10! Yet here they grow, and as excellent as big

Let me borrow, in further illustration of the farming development of this country, some statistics of this year's cultivation in a few of the leading river valleys north and south. They are from Mr. Thomas's personal collections for the Denver News: The Cache-a-la-Poudre is the most northern side valley of Colorado, and markets at Cheyenne; it has at least 200,000 acres of tillable lands, and probably not 5,000 are in use yet; but among its chief products this year are 25,000 bushels of oats, 5,000 wheat, 5,000 potatoes, 2,500 corn, 2,500 tons of hay, and 15,000 to 20,000 pounds of butter. The oat crop averaged 48 1-2 bushels per acre; and the cows have generally paid for themselves in butter this season. The Big Thompson, another of the northern valleys, has about 2,000 acres under cultivation, and yields this year 33,000 bushels potatoes, with an average of 165 bushels per acre cultivated; 27,000 bushels oats, 8,000 bushels wheat, 3,300 bushels corn, 1,400 tons hay, and 7,500 pounds of cheese from a single dairy. One farmer has 700 to 800 head of cattle, and 100 to 200 horses and colts. In the Platte valley, for sixty miles north of Denver, or to the mouth of Cache-a-la-Poudre, there were raised this year 15,000 bushels wheat, 27,000 bushels oats, 5,000 bushels barley, 3,000 bushels corn, 7,000 bushels potatoes, and 1,500 tons of hay, and about 23,000 pounds of butter made. In the valley of the Platte, south of Denver, twenty miles long, there are 3,000 acres under cultivation, nearly half in wheat, and a quarter in oats, with crops of barley at 66 bushels to the acre, of wheat

70, and of oats 65, and the average being 30 to 35 of wheat, 35 to 40 of oats and barley. Bear Creek, just south of Denver, has 1,225 acres cultivated, divided about as those of the Platte are. In the main valley of the Arkansas are nearly 6,000 acres of cultivated land, half corn, and a third wheat; in Fontaine qui Bouille, a branch of the Arkansas, also 6,000, with almost exactly the same division among crops. The St. Charles, another tributary, cultivates 1,500 acres, half corn, a third wheat, the rest oats. In the Huerfana valley, still another tributary of the Arkansas, are 5,000 acres under tillage, with the usual southern division, corn largely dominating, and here are some of the largest farms in the state, ranging up to 1,500 acres in cultivation, and so requiring but few farmers to make up the total. In this valley, the corn crop averages from 30 to 50 bushels the acre, wheat 20 to 40, and oats 40 to 45. These are but specimens of twice as many valleys above and below Denver, in which farming has been begun, but only begun, yet with such profitable results as insure rapid development.

I now quote the prices of agricultural produce this week at Denver; they will be likely to recede as the crops come into market: Barley 3c. a pound, corn 3 1-2 to 4 1-2c., cheese 20 to 22c., corn meal 5c., eggs 50 to 60c. a dozen, flour \$7 to 9 a sack of 100 pounds, oats 3c. a pound, potatoes 2 to 3c. a pound, fresh tomatoes 3c. a pound, wheat 3 3-4c. a pound, cabbages 1c. a pound, butter 45c. a pound retail, chickens \$5.50 a dozen, good beef 12 to 15c. a pound. At Cheyenne, on the Pacific Railroad,

prices are somewhat higher,—like these, for instance, for vegetables: Cabbages 6 to 8c. a pound, onions 6 to 8c. a pound, turnips 2 to 4c. a pound, beets 5 to 7c. a pound, tomatoes 20 to 25c. a pound, squashes 4 to 7c. a pound, cucumbers 40 to 50c. a dozen. Beef is, on the whole, the cheapest grown and the cheapest selling food here. It costs about half the New York and Boston retail prices.

Stock-raising on the Plains is simple and profitable business. The animals can roam at will, and a single man can tend hundreds. The only enemies are the Indians and the diseases that the Texas cattle bring up from the South. But the former are the great evil; the confusion, danger and loss they have created this season sum up a serious blow not only to stock-raising, but to all farming. Even if the evil is suppressed hereafter, this season's raids are a year's loss to the agricultural interests of Colorado. Many farmers have given up in despair from danger and disaster, and retired from the field; others hesitate and refuse to come, who otherwise would be here at once and in force of capital and energy, to enter upon the business.

These great interests of mining and farming shade naturally into others, and already there are the beginnings of various manufacturing developments, as there are the materials and incentives for such undertakings without stint. Some fifteen or twenty flouring-mills are in operation throughout the state. The Colorado wheat makes a rich hearty flour, bearing a creamy golden tinge; and I have



eaten no where else in America better bread than is made from it. There is a baker in Georgetown, whose products are as rich and light as the best of German wheat bread. The wheat will rank with the very best that America produces, and is more like the California grain than that of "the States." Coal mines are abundant, and several are being profitably worked along the lower range of the mountains; as, indeed, they have been found and opened at intervals along the line of the Pacific Railroad over the mountains, and are already supplying its engines with a most excellent fuel,—a hard, dry, brown coal, very pure and free-burning; in Boulder valley and Golden City, iron is being manufactured from native ore; at Golden City, there is a successful manufactory of pottery ware and fire brick; also a paper-mill and a tannery, and three flouring-mills; the state already supplies its own salt; soda deposits are abundant everywhere, and will be a great source of wealth; woolen mills are projected and greatly needed, as wool-growing is the simplest of agricultural pursuits here; a valuable tin mine has been lately discovered and its value proved, up in the mountains; and next year the Railroad will be one of Colorado's possessions, and bring harmony and unity and healthy development to all her growth, social, material, and political. Also, by that time she will be a state, and so responsible for her own government, be it good or bad.

As we go out, Professor Agassiz leads a new party of eastern notables from over the Plains and

into the Mountains. He is already seething with enthusiasm; all Brazil was nothing, he says, to what he has seen of natural beauty and scientific revelation in crossing the Plains; but the half is not told him. When he comes face to face with the mountains,—the mountains in perfection and the mountains in ruin,—and their phenomena of parks and wealth of verdure, then indeed he may feel he is among the “Gardens of the Gods.” The professor finds abundant materials to sustain his wide-spread glacial theories; all these vast elevated plains, from Missouri River to Mountains, from Montana to Mexico,—the very heart of the Continent,—are but in his eye the deposit of great fields of ice, stretching down from these hills and washing down their heights. What must they have been once to have lost so much and remain so Titanesque!—to be still the Mother Mountains of the Continent?

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Here rests the record of our Summer Vacation in the Rocky Mountains. The stage ride back to Cheyenne,—now hardened to long journeys and open air life,—was a long eighteen hours' pleasure under warm sun and cool stars; and we tumbled into the tender berths of Pullman's palace car, waiting on the railroad track, at three o'clock in the morning, with a keen gratitude to Colorado and all its kind friends for what rare joy of new experience and rich hospitality they had given us, and as keen a welcome to steam locomotion, beds, and the near home. Two days of the Pacific and the Northwestern Railroads brought us to Chicago, and there

we separated, as we gathered, about the hospitable tables of Governor Bross.

Life was fresher to all of us, new to some, for the health and the sentiment of the thin pure air of the Mountains and the Parks. Their skies and their waters repeat the fabled fountain of perpetual youth. It is to them that America will go, as Europe to Switzerland, for rest and recreation, for new and exhilarating scenes, for pure and bracing air, for pleasure and for health. They offer no wonderful valley like the Yo Semite; no continental river breaking through continental mountains like the Columbia; no cataract like Niagara; no forests like those of the Sierra Nevada range, no nor the equals, in diversified form and color and species, of those of New England or of Pennsylvania; and yet I am greatly mistaken if the verdict of more familiar acquaintance by the American people with America is not, that here,—among these central ranges of continental mountains and these great companion parks, within this wedded circle of majestic hill and majestic plain, under these skies of purity, and in this atmosphere of elixir, lies the pleasure-ground and health-home of the nation.

Smoother ways will soon be provided, but no philosophic or accustomed traveler need wait for them. The true aroma of the country is to be found in the saddle and in the camp. It is not necessary to travel with such numbers and with such protection of authority as was our fortune. A smaller party, more independent of time and circumstances, is on many accounts even more

desirable. If of men purely, four to eight is a fit number for an expedition; if the two sexes are combined, about double these limits will be found desirable. We met in the Middle Park a young man from Yale college, who was making a thorough journey of two months through the Mountains and Parks without any companions but such as he picked up from day to day or week to week. He had bought a pony and blankets and coffee-pot in Denver, and for the rest bargained for his daily rations en route, stopping for the night at ranches and hotels where he found them, and in cabins or tents, if the doors were open and there was room, and under a hospitable tree when all else was denied him.

August is the best month to come, for that is nearest summer in the high mountains; the streams are lower, purer and more readily forded; the weather most uniformly clear. But any time from June 15 to September 15 will answer for visiting either or both the great Parks; and I beg every "Across the Continent" traveler to give at least a week and if possible a month to the interior regions of Colorado. But do not come unless you will visit one of the Parks at least, go over one or two of the high passes, and ascend either Gray's Peak or Mount Lincoln. Else you will discredit my enthusiasm, and deny yourself when you talk of having seen Colorado.

*By the Same Author.*

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# Across the Continent:

*A STAGE RIDE OVER THE PLAINS*

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IN THE SUMMER OF 1865,

*WITH SPEAKER COLFAX.*

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## *Across the Continent.*

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